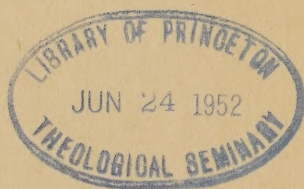


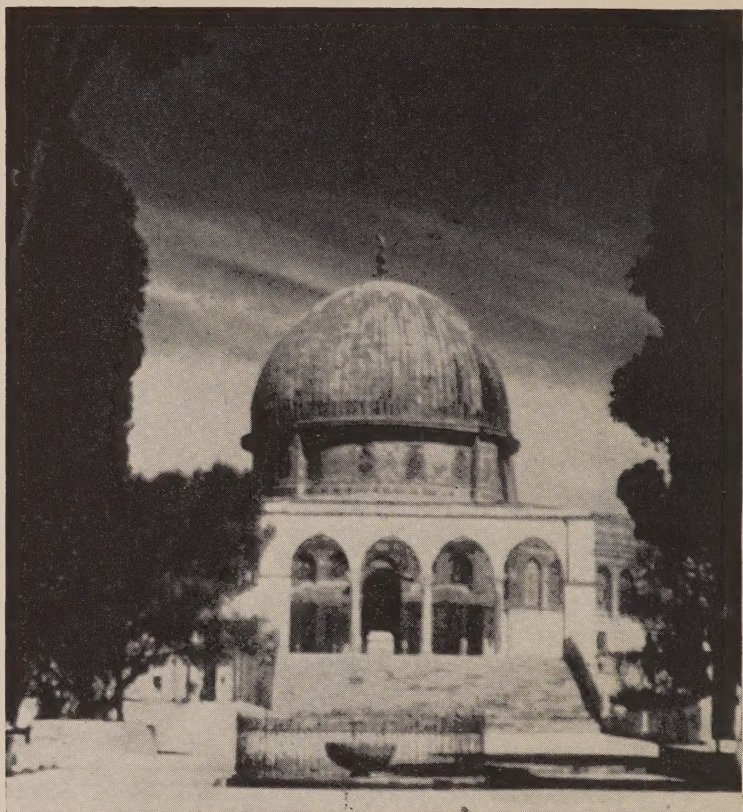
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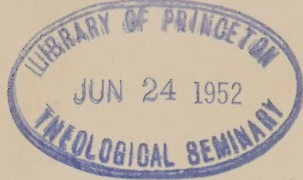


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From the NILE *to the* WATERS *of* DAMASCUS



Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, built in the 6th century A. D. The lower part of the building is covered with marble slabs, while that from the window sill upward is covered with porcelain tile in the Persian style. Passages from the Koran, the Mohammedan Bible, are inscribed on the building as a frieze. In the foreground are the "Judgment Arches." A Moslem legend states that on Judgment Day everyone will be weighed on scales hung from these arches to determine his fate



From the NILE *to the*
WATERS *of* DAMASCUS

BY WILLIAM F. ARNDT ✓

PROFESSOR OF NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

AT CONCORDIA SEMINARY, ST. LOUIS, MO.

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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES

To CHURCH-CRAFT PICTURES

the firm whose kindness made my trip to the Near East possible, this little book is dedicated with assurances of deep and abiding gratitude.

W. F. A.

Preface

IN THE FALL of 1946 the officials of Church-Craft Pictures made me the kind and unexpected offer that I join a little expedition of the firm to Bible lands, intended to obtain photographs of the principal sites mentioned in the Holy Scriptures. I had served as theological and archaeological consultant of the firm, and with joy I had observed its healthy development. Since Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, to whose faculty I have the honor to belong, was in a position to grant me a semester's furlough, I gratefully accepted. The expedition, as it was finally organized, consisted of the Rev. and Mrs. Erich H. Kiehl, Mr. Rupert Leach, and myself. Mr. Leach, I must add, is not connected with Church-Craft Pictures; he represents Sawyers Inc. of Portland, Oregon. Through his addition the undertaking became a dual one, Church-Craft Pictures and Sawyers Inc. collaborating in the venture.

The photographs that were taken were color pictures; those of Mr. Leach, in addition, were three-dimensional. The times in Palestine and, to a certain degree, in Egypt were turbulent, but God graciously granted us protection, and no harm came to us.

The objective of the mission was achieved, the photographs which the two firms desired were obtained. It is hoped that by and by the photographic results can be made available to the public.

On account of their deep and abiding interest in the Holy Land many of my friends and acquaintances have expressed a desire to receive a report on what our expedition saw and experienced in Egypt and Palestine, and hence I trust it will not be considered improper that I, through this little work, add to the voluminous literature on the Holy Land. My aim has not been

to produce a very learned work. While I was constantly at pains to verify what I submit, the book is intended to be of a popular nature. If it makes the narrative of our precious Bible a little more vivid; if it, especially through its illustrations, nearly all of which are kindly furnished by the Rev. Erich H. Kiehl, helps us to understand Scriptural references and allusions; if Sunday school teachers and other church workers will here and there be aided by it in their important work, its purpose has been fulfilled.

My companions and I wish to express our gratitude to Dr. A. Jeffery, acting director of the American School of Oriental Research, the hospitality of which we enjoyed; Dr. Edwin Moll, guarding the Lutheran interests in Palestine, who served us with friendly guidance and suggestions; and to the Marto Brothers, who furnished us the transportation we needed and aided us as guides and interpreters. Many others who in museums or mosques or churches or in their capacity as businessmen helped to make our visit pleasant and profitable will have to be satisfied with a silent but very grateful bow; to enumerate them would require too long a list.

W. ARNDT

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From the NILE *to the* WATERS *of* DAMASCUS

Egypt

IT WAS A BRIGHT, warm Sunday morning, February 23, 1947, to be precise, when our good ship *Saturnia* cast anchor in Alexandria. There was no difficulty on this occasion in making the passengers appear at the breakfast table in time; at an early hour every bed was empty. At once, when coming on deck, I examined the sky line of the city and saw numerous minarets and, thank God! some church steeples. The famous Pharos, or lighthouse tower, which used to welcome the traveler in the days of Roman grandeur and which was considered one of the great wonders of the world, has disappeared; nor were there as many foreign ships in the renowned harbor as I had expected. Undoubtedly this lack of vessels is still due to the late war. Why should I detain the reader with a detailed account of the depressing experiences which awaited my fellow travelers and me before we could say that we had been admitted to Egypt? The immigration officials had to approve our entering, examining our passports, and they went about their task with measured step and slow, not neglecting their ten-o'clock cup of coffee. Seeing the baggage through the customs entailed a wait of four or five hours, and the payment of the fees demanded by the group of husky and crafty longshoremen who took our trunk and valises to the customs office and finally placed our belongings into a taxi, considerably decreased our supply of ready cash. At the Piccadilly Hotel we found delightful and fairly inexpensive quarters.

The traveler soon notices that he is in a strange world. Not only is a foreign tongue with harsh sounds, the Arabic, spoken all about him, not only is the clothing of the people in many instances different, the fez taking the place of the hat and a dark veil hiding the faces of the women, but the streets are narrow and usually untidy, the houses of the poorer people are exceedingly lowly, and bazaars are seen where the food offered for sale is exposed to whatever influences, animate or inanimate, flies or dust, happen to make their attack upon it.

We eagerly inquired into the religious status of the country. At present there are about 17 million people in Egypt, and of these only one million are Christians. The old Christian Church in Egypt is the Coptic Church, *Coptic* probably being a derivative of the word *Egyptian*. The Copts pride themselves on being the direct descendants of the Egyptians who lived in the days of the ancient Pharaohs. Their religion is largely formalistic and is lacking in missionary ardor. Most of the million Christians in Egypt are Copts. Other Christian denominations, like the Roman Catholics and the Greek Orthodox, and of American Protestants especially the United Presbyterians, and of Christian organizations the Y. M. C. A., are active in Egypt. The Mohammedan character of the country, as one visits the various cities, is constantly emphasized by the call of the muezzin, an official of the minaret, who five times a day calls the faithful to worship and always announces that Allah is god and Mohammed his prophet. The minaret is a slender tower, erected, as a rule, at the side of a mosque. Some of the minarets are architecturally quite beautiful.

At once, upon his arrival, the traveler is initiated in the practical philosophy of social life in the Orient. The chief principle is that those who are well-to-do must let the poorer classes render them as many services as possible, paying handsomely all the time. The tourist naturally is made the



The skyline of Cairo is a sea of minarets. Five times each day the muezzin, a Mohammedan religious official, calls the faithful to prayer from the minaret balcony



The Antiquities Department of the Egyptian Government is restoring this portion of the temple system at the Sakkareh step pyramid

special victim of this view; he is supposed to have much money, and every little task, such as carrying a small bag which he at home does not dream of turning over to somebody else, he is expected to assign to some poor lad who is one of the big army ready to render such services. The money paid for such petty services is called *baksheesh*, which seems to be the first word children of the poorer classes learn to pronounce.

Egypt is dependent on the Nile, which in the late summer and early fall leaves its banks and overflows the lowlands on both sides, furnishing them with a rich deposit of fertile soil. Several decades ago a huge dam was constructed at Assuan, about 500 miles south of Cairo, through which the waters of the Nile are regulated. The great lake which is caused by the dam is filled in the flood season, and when the dry months come, the water is gradually sent downstream so that the irrigation canals can be filled. The country somewhat resembles a broom in its habitable part. In the Nile delta, where the river is divided into a number of arms, this part is broad, but gradually it narrows to a slender strip stretching along the Nile, now and then having green fields on both sides of the river and then again on one side only. This verdant, fertile part, when the narrowing process has reached the handle of the broom, is not more than a few miles wide. In the eastern section of the Nile delta is the land of Goshen, where Jacob and his sons dwelt. One can understand that here there was abundant pasturage available for their cattle. Cf. Gen. 46:28-34. The climate, on account of the dryness, rain being exceedingly rare in the region beyond the proximity of the Mediterranean, is one of the most healthful on the globe, and the cities of the Nile south of Alexandria are becoming increasingly popular as winter resorts.

The Pyramids

THE EGYPTIAN CITIES we visited, besides Alexandria, were Cairo, with its many mosques and museums; Assuan, with its granite quarries and the island of Elephantine; and Luxor and Karnak, with their staggering number of splendid ancient temples and royal tombs. Considerations of space compel me to confine myself to remarks on what people consider the objects of supreme interest among the numerous remains of the old Egyptian civilization. Best known, of course, are the pyramids, which the traveler is eager to see at close range. After his arrival in Cairo, his eyes have rested on them many a time when he surveyed the western sky. The "terraced" or "step" pyramid of King Zoser I was our first objective. It is located at a distance of about six miles southwest from the site of old Memphis and fifteen or twenty miles from Cairo. It is called "step" pyramid because it was erected in enormous sections which are marked off and from the distance look like girdles or narrow steps. It is not the highest, but perhaps the oldest of all these structures. At the foot of it are found temples and tombs and decorated chambers which are entrancing to the student of archaeology. A statue of King Zoser I has been discovered in an excavated little shrine in the immediate vicinity of the pyramid. Not far from it, in subterranean caverns, sacred bulls were buried in huge sarcophagi, which one still beholds with mingled awe and disgust. Students of history will recall that the old Egyptians venerated a bull called Apis,

which in their mind represented or even contained the deity. The animal was black, with a white triangle on the forehead, and had a peculiar knot under the tongue. When it died, there was mourning in Egypt, and everybody was unhappy till another bull of the same description had been found. The animal was kept in state and fed sumptuously. When it died, it was embalmed and given burial in sacred chambers constructed for that purpose. With a sense of sadness one passes these mummies — evidences of idol worship reminding one of St. Paul's words Rom. 1:23.

From there we proceeded to the pyramids of Gizeh, the most gigantic of all, several miles distant from that of Zoser I.

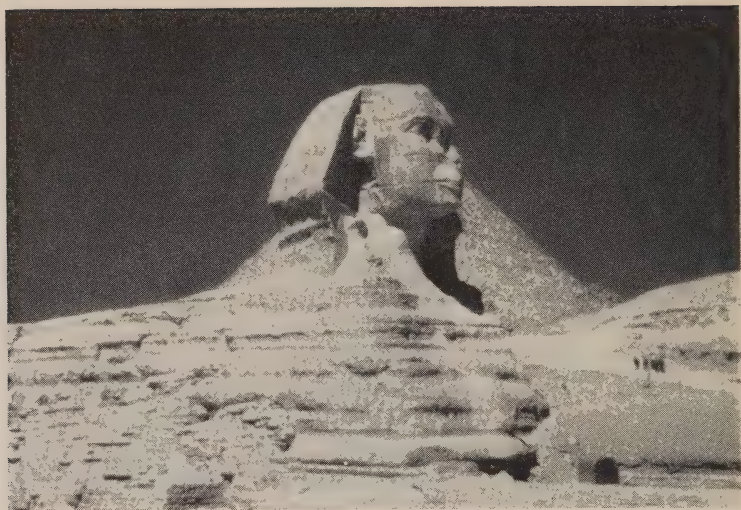
The pyramid of Cheops (Khufu in Egyptian) is built of very large blocks of stone and it tapers off till it ends in a small platform on the top. At present its various layers can be seen; originally it was covered with giant slabs of stone which gave to the exterior a smooth surface. Since these slabs, consisting of alabaster stone, were excellent building material, they were in the Middle Ages taken away by people, for instance, by the Mohammedan conqueror who built the citadel in Cairo or by his fellow religionists who erected the grand mosques of that city. Now comparatively few, located near the top, are left. The pyramid, covering thirteen acres, is about 480 feet high and consists of more than 2,300,000 blocks of stone, each weighing on an average $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons. (Cf. Breasted, *History of Egypt*, p. 117.) The engineer that planned it must have been a master of the profession. Why was it built? King Cheops, who ruled, it is said, long before 2000 B. C., had it constructed as a mausoleum for himself and the queen. The size and impressiveness of the structure, so he hoped undoubtedly, would keep his name from being forgotten, and in that he succeeded. Another objective he sought was security for his embalmed body; the entrance to the burial chamber in the interior was to be carefully concealed so no enemy or



This 200 foot step pyramid at Sakkareh, Egypt, stands at the edge of the Libyan Desert, a short distance from Old Memphis. It was built in the 28th century B. C. and is the earliest known pyramid

robber could find it. This latter objective he did not attain. When about 150 years ago scientists entered the mortuary chamber, they found that it had been rifled, the body of the king had been removed, and the treasures which presumably, according to Egyptian custom, were buried with him, were all gone. When this occurred, no one can say. The removal of the outside slabs made it possible for robbers to look for the tomb proper. This gentry dug into the pyramid and carved out a passage which ultimately connected with the true passageway leading to the burial chamber.

About a half mile from the great pyramid the famous sphinx has its location. It is so gigantic that several people can stand in one of its ears. The face is that of a man and the body that of a lion. Why it was constructed seems to be a mystery. It is definitely asserted that the face is that



About 45 centuries the silent sphinx still stands guard over the Nile Valley at Giza near Cairo. The sphinx has the form of a crouching lion with the face of Pharaoh Khafre, who supposedly ordered it to be carved. In the background is the pyramid of Khafre, the second of the Gizeh triad

of the Pharaoh who had it made. It is largely carved out of rock. At present it is not in a good state of preservation, because Arabs have used it as a target for artillery fire and have done a good deal of damage to the noble head. It still faces the East with a serene countenance, apparently amused at the ambitions and worries of men who come and go, creatures of a day, and take themselves very seriously. No one can view this colossal structure without being deeply moved. In the neighborhood of the pyramid and the sphinx excavated temples and shrines abound, and the interested visitor can spend days here viewing these ancient works of art. The pyramids altogether number about seventy, but only a few are located in the district under discussion.

What detracts from the pleasure with which one studies these monuments of antiquity is the realization that they

were constructed at an incalculable price, consisting in the labor of many thousands of poor, enslaved subjects. Herodotus, the Greek historian of the fifth century B. C., who visited Egypt, tells us that 100,000 men worked for twenty years at the construction of the great pyramid, that of Cheops. What agonies and tears must have gone into the construction of these colossal memorials! What egotism they represent! What self-adoring pride, what cruelty, was practiced to bring about their construction! The citizens apparently had no choice whatever as to the question whether or not they should participate in these projects. Theirs was but to do and die. The question presents itself whether the children of Israel were compelled to join in the slave labor connected with the erection of the pyramids. Chronology gives a negative reply; the oppression of the Israelites occurred hundreds of years later.

The pyramids lie at the edge of the Libyan Desert overlooking the Nile and its fertile plains. Where they are situated, the ground is absolutely barren except in spots where artificial irrigation is employed, like at a point near the great pyramid, where a sumptuously equipped hotel has been established. As one looks west, nothing but sand hills can be seen. The visitor says to himself that all of Egypt would be such a desert if it were not for the River Nile.

The Mokatam Hills, east of the river, furnished the stones for the pyramids. Scholars hold that when the Nile floods came and the river overflowed its banks and the whole valley became one mighty sea, the stones were placed on rafts and taken across the river. The water approached the plateau on which the pyramids were a-building, and the stones could be deposited near the spot where they were needed.

The Valley of the Kings

ABOUT 450 miles south of Cairo, on the Nile, lie the two cities (mentioned in passing before) Luxor and Karnak, both famous in the annals of Egyptian history and forming, with their environments, hunting grounds *par excellence* for archaeologists. The area of the two cities, which are located on the east side of the river, and the land directly opposite to them on the west side, in ancient times was the site of Thebes, referred to by Homer as the Thebes of the hundred gates. In the fertile, verdant plains on the west bank of the Nile we passed two gigantic statues, almost seventy feet high, of King Amenhotep III, which were known to the Greeks as the Colossi of Memnon. Not far away we saw a multitude of other interesting remains of ancient Egyptian civilization in its most flourishing state. Following a road which led into the hills, we arrived at a narrow valley lying behind the high row of cliffs visible from the river. It was here where the kings prepared their tombs after the pyramid form of tomb construction had been abandoned. The landscape is that of the desert, nothing is to be seen but rocks and sand. Suddenly the guide said: "We have arrived; here are the tombs." We were in front of the first one. The guide pointed to an opening in the hillside next to the road and on a level with it, about five feet high, which might appear to be nothing but the beginning of a little cavern. But the presence of guards in uniform placed there by the government at once revealed that here we were dealing with some-

thing else than an ordinary natural phenomenon. Tickets were obtained, and with a guide at the head, our party began its descent down the stairs into subterranean galleries and halls. Electric light has been installed, making the visit more easy for us than it was in the days of old. There are some forty such tombs in this valley, of which we visited several that are considered specially interesting.

The aim of the kings here, too, was to obtain a secure resting place for the body; long, descending passageways were cut into rocks, and after one has gone down many a step, finally the mortuary chamber is reached. This is a room which has highly decorated walls depicting scenes from the other world. In its center stood the sarcophagus where the body of the king was laid to rest. The aim of these monarchs to find security for their mortal remains was not attained; tomb robbers entered here as well as they had in the pyramids. Some of the mummies were destroyed by the vandals in their search for jewels. A tomb that escaped such treatment was that of Tutankhamen, discovered in 1922, although the book issued by the Egyptian Museum in Cairo entitled *A Brief Description of the Principal Monuments* says, in the section on the tomb of Tutankhamen: "There is no doubt that the tomb of Tutankhamen had been entered by robbers, subsequent to the burial, and sealed a second time by the official inspectors." Certain valuable objects apparently were removed by intruders. But if pilfering took place, it was of a minor nature; the mummy itself was not disturbed, and the chief treasures remained. When the tomb had for the second time been sealed by the official inspectors, and before another raid on its contents was made, rocks fell or were piled up which completely covered the opening and the first passageway, so that by and by even the existence of the tomb was forgotten. We had the privilege of visiting this tomb, which has received an extraordinary amount of publicity since its discovery.



The famous Avenue of Sphinxes at Karnak, near Luxor, Egypt



The Sacred Lake of Osiris mirrors the ruined grandeur of the Great Hall of Karnak. Bodies of Pharaohs were placed on a sacred boat and sailed around this lake before being buried in the underground tombs of the Valley of the Kings across the Nile

It was an awe-inspiring moment when we entered the mortuary chamber and there saw the outward casement, or coffin, which still contains the mummy of the king. The body had been placed into three anthropoid coffins, that is, coffins which have the form of the human body and evidently represented the form and features of the youthful king, who died when he was only eighteen years old. The innermost coffin was made of gold, the one next to it was of wood with gold and glass inlay, and the outer of wood, highly ornamented, of course. This outer anthropoid coffin was left in the mortuary chamber in the Valley of the Kings to guard the monarch's body, while the other coffins were removed to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, together with many of the interesting and costly objects that adorned the royal last resting place. Tutankhamen, it is asserted by Egyptologists, lived about 1350 B. C. The Bible Christian is amazed to see the extent to which the heathen Egyptians manifested their belief in the immortality of the soul. At the basis of all the care for the body through embalmment and proper burial was the conviction that death does not mean the end of a person's existence. Superstition entered in; it was held that if the body decayed, the soul would enter some animal. This belief prevailed till Christianity, with its teaching of the resurrection of the body, was accepted. — Were the Israelites still in Egypt when Tutankhamen reigned? In view of the uncertain state of chronology that question is difficult to answer. In many quarters it is held that the years of oppression for Israel had not yet occurred when this young king occupied the Egyptian throne. These last remarks indicate some of the meditations in which our party engaged as we walked from one tomb to the other in the Valley of the Kings.

Lydda, Palestine

OUR PARTY made the railroad trip from Egypt to Palestine by night. When the morning had dawned and we had become fully awake, we found ourselves well on in Palestine. Familiar names, such as Gaza, began to appear at the railroad stations. What an interesting country we were in!

The people we saw in the countryside, inhabited by Arabs, were dressed very much like the Egyptians. The men wore long mantles, or they appeared in very baggy trousers. Their headdress was the old turban, consisting chiefly of a scarf wound around the head, or it was the flowing cloth called *kaffiyeh*, which is held in place by a cord called *agal*. A number of them wore the fez. In the towns men wearing western clothes were seen. The women were dressed chiefly in long black garments; on their heads they had a black shawl; with it there was a veil which could easily be drawn over the face. Camels and donkeys were much in evidence.

The aspect of the country, generally speaking, was inviting. Grainfields were to be seen, and beautiful groves, especially orange groves, greeted the eye. Frequently, to the west, sand dunes made their appearance, and beyond them the blue Mediterranean came into view. The weather was exceedingly pleasant: the sun was shining; it was cool, but not cold. The date was March 13. Soon we arrived in Lydda (cf. Acts 9:32), where we had to alight to reach Jerusalem. There is a railroad taking passengers and freight to Jerusalem from Lydda, but on account of the activities of Jewish fanatics in Palestine and bombings of the road this service had been discontinued. Though Lydda is a trans-



"The harvest is come"



*Loaded with sheaves, the camel brings his burden to the village
threshing floor*

portation center it, nevertheless, through its Arabic population, in its houses, and in other respects, has an Oriental appearance.

The British military were encountered everywhere. Palestine was still a British mandate, and what a troublesome stepchild it had proved to be! From 1936 to 1939 there were Arabic uprisings of a serious nature, resulting in many deaths and much suffering. At the time of our visit some Jews, so-called terrorists, were causing much havoc. The Jewish party known as the Zionists endeavored to bring their displaced people in Europe to Palestine, which they would like to see become a haven of refuge for their persecuted fellow religionists all over the world. The intention is to make Palestine again a Jewish state comparable to what it was in the days of David and Solomon.

In the summer of 1947 Great Britain gave up its mandate over Palestine and withdrew all of its troops. Not long afterwards, several months after our party had left, the United Nations Assembly resolved to follow the recommendation of its special committee, which had examined conditions in Palestine and ascertained the views of its inhabitants, and to divide Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab State. The sections inhabited chiefly by Jews were to be included in the Jewish State, the Arabs were to be given the other areas. Jerusalem, sacred to Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians, and Bethlehem, dear to Christians, were to be neutral ground. Since in most regions Jews and Arabs are intermingled, the partition could only approximately follow ethnic lines. Neither people was satisfied with the plan. The Jews laid claim to all of Palestine as the land of their fathers, and the Arabs were unwilling to be deprived of territory which has been in their possession for many centuries. The Jews, with Tel Aviv as their capital, at once organized the State of Israeli and set up their government. The Arabs denounced this move, a stand in which they had



Tel Aviv

the support of the surrounding Arab nations like Egypt and Transjordan. At once civil war broke out. The Jews defied their Arab neighbors in Palestine and their Arab enemies in the countries about them. Many smaller battles were fought, much blood was shed, and heavy damage was inflicted on Jerusalem and other places. The United Nations intervened, an armistice was arranged. But the unselfish and resourceful United Nations representative, Count Bernadotte, was trapped by irresponsible Jewish fanatics and killed. At the end of 1948 it is difficult to say whether the efforts of the United Nations Assembly will succeed. There is some hope that the armistice, brought about by the labors of Count Bernadotte and his successor, Mr. Ralph Bunche, but interrupted several times, will be continued indefinitely. After this digression I resume my narrative.

Approaching Jerusalem

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING auto trips I have made is the one that took my companions and me from Lydda to Jerusalem. Since the railroad was not functioning, we made the trip to the royal city by taxi; bus service was available, too. The distance is about thirty miles. Greeted by smiling fields and gardens, we were rolling forward through a region dear to us through Biblical history and were in a state of spiritual exaltation. The coastal plain, dotted with orange groves, gave way to low, undulating hills covered chiefly with green wheat fields. Quaint Arabic villages were traversed. After six or seven miles of travel in these low hills of Judea, the so-called Shephelah, we entered the real hill country of the land. Readers of the Gospels are familiar with the expression "the hill country of Judea." Cf. Luke 1:39. The hills here rise to a height of several thousand feet and can be dignified with the appellation "mountains." The road constitutes a pass between the high hills, which are so close to each other that they frequently do not afford much more space than is required for the road itself. It is seldom that the gorge widens into a real valley. The aspect of the country, as a result, is stern but grand. At places the hillsides were almost entirely bare except for little shrubs and some startlingly beautiful wild flowers: the Palestinian anemone and poppy. Then again the hillsides were covered with olive trees or clusters of pine and cedar. Here and there convents appeared, located on hilltops, the cross above them visible from afar. The view was most captivating.

The little villages at the roadside were not of great importance in Biblical history. The road took us higher and higher; it is an excellent, hard-surface highway. After about an hour numerous buildings could be seen, and the chauffeur announced that we were entering Jerusalem. Indeed, from an eminence we could see its towers, steeples, minarets, and old walls. Our feelings were somewhat akin to those expressed in Psalm 125. Here it was — our destination, the city of prophets and kings and especially of our Lord and Savior. We were taken to the gate of the American School of Oriental Research, where our coming had been announced and where we were given a friendly welcome and found a pleasant home during our sojourn in Palestine. On account of the unsettled conditions the dormitory of the school was almost empty and we could easily be accommodated.



The American School of Oriental Research is located but a few minutes' walk from the Damascus Gate of the Old City. The school enjoys an enviable reputation in the Middle East

Modern Jerusalem

HOW CAN THIS CITY of about 140,000 people be best described? One must carefully distinguish between the old Jerusalem, which is confined within walls, and the modern city outside these confines. Located around the old Jerusalem to the west and north and south, this part of the city is quite European in its aspects. It has modern stores or shops and hotels; its streets are of the European type, although they could be wider; the homes are equipped with modern conveniences and often attractive. The architecture is of the mission or Southern California kind. Transportation is provided through an excellent system of busses and through taxis. What hindered our becoming quickly and thoroughly acquainted with the various sections of the city were numerous barbed-wire barricades which shut off certain quarters, entrance being permitted only to those who had a pass. Army sentinels were posted at the openings, who saw to it that the wire was not removed and that no unauthorized persons gained admittance. The reader will correctly surmise that the activities of the Jewish terrorists induced the government to establish restricted zones.

It is not necessary to say much about this modern city, because it is like other towns of the same size. It has a number of churches, convents, schools, mosques, and minarets. Here one finds cinemas (movies), theaters, offices of lawyers and physicians. Here there are hospitals. The Syrian Orphanage, known as Schneller's institution, an es-

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tablishment which has been a great blessing to all Palestine, is located there. It was founded by Johann Ludwig Schneller almost one hundred years ago. His sons and grandsons have continued the work, the Evangelical Christians of Germany have supported it. Its aim is to give a training to orphans which is both Christian and secularly useful. The pupils are taught some handicraft through which they can make their living. We were deeply touched when we were shown by Mr. Asfur, the present manager, a department for the blind, where these unfortunates were making cane chairs.



Close to the ancient walls of the city is modern Zion Square, the Times Square of Jerusalem. It is a hive of bustling commercial and business activity. During the pilgrimage seasons the languages of all nations may be heard at every street corner and in every hotel lobby. Street signs and public notices are printed in English, Hebrew, and Arabic

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The old and the new as seen from the Jerusalem-Jericho Road near the Herod Gate and the American School. On the terrace stands the beautiful Palestine Archaeological Museum, built through the generous grant by the Rockefeller Foundation. — Like their American cousins, the Arab children enjoy having their picture taken

The schools of the city are private ventures. There is the Swedish school for small children, now under the leadership of Miss Signe Ekblad, a Lutheran. There is the school of St. George's Cathedral (Anglican), where the boys can take the upper grades of the elementary school and the high school classes. There is the so-called Bishop Gobat's School, originally founded as a joint venture of German Protestantism and of Anglicanism, but now supported by the Church Mission Society of England. There is the Terra Sancta School of the Franciscans, a French elementary and secondary institution. The Jews have their own schools. They have erected a large university on Mount Scopus, near the Mount of Olives, with a magnificent library. Many of the Arabic boys and girls are educated in Christian schools, and it is hoped that in their hearts the Gospel more frequently

finds entrance than the rather rare definitely professed conversions to Christianity indicate.

Jerusalem has an excellent symphony orchestra, famous physicians and surgeons, lawyers, and scholars; the intellectual life is quite strong. Spiritually the city is not active. The Mohammedans observe to some extent their weekly holiday, Friday; the Jews when their majority is viewed keep Saturday by closing their shops and having a good time; the Christians keep Sunday. There is not much to be seen of religious fervor in the Christian ranks. The churches go their accustomed way, not many people come to the services; the financial support is furnished chiefly from the outside. Since at the time of our visit Jerusalem was heavily garrisoned by British soldiers, the military were a good deal in evidence in the services.

The Old City

WITHIN THE WALLS one enters the Orient and the ancient world. Here the streets are extremely narrow, often not exceeding six feet or even four feet in width. The dwellings are old. The street pavement is with few exceptions big cobblestones. Oriental bazaars are conducted here with all their color, oddity, and disgusting features. Many churches, chapels, and schools are found in this old city, too. There is a Mohammedan and a Jewish quarter, and there are several Christian quarters. The walls of the city are not so ancient as one might think; they were erected by the Turks in 1542. Their height is from twenty-five to fifty feet, and they certainly look formidable. One can walk about on these old ramparts and is rewarded for the labor involved by excellent views of the city and its surroundings. As of old, a number of gates admit the traveler. Chief among them are the Damascus and the Jaffa Gates. At the latter, at the southwest corner, is the old citadel, dating back, at least in some of its parts, to the time of Herod the Great.

Here the remark may be made that Jerusalem has been destroyed a number of times, and as one studies its sacred sites, one must not forget that what was surface at the time of Christ may now be twenty or forty feet under the level of the streets. What are the adjectives with which one might describe the old city? Picturesque, attractive, interesting, archaic, smelly, crowded — all these would fit. One must not think that old Jerusalem covers a big area; a brisk fifteen-minute walk will suffice to take a person from one end to the



Southwest of the great Jaffa Gate rises the Citadel of Zion, dating in its present form from the 14th century. The northeast tower probably corresponds to the "Pharsael Tower" of Herod's Palace and offers the finest example of the ancient wall towers of Jerusalem. The original citadel was occupied by King David when he captured the city about 1000 B. C. and brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, which he made the new capital of his dominions

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other. In the old city the Greek Orthodox, the Armenian, and the Roman Catholic Churches have their Palestinian headquarters. Here there are some of the chief sanctuaries of Mohammedanism. One is thrilled as the long history of the city from the days of Abraham and Melchizedek to the time of our divine Savior presents itself to the mind.

Sacred Sites in the Old City

The Tomb and Golgotha

Most frequently visited of all the sacred places in the old city is the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Our Lord died and was buried outside the city. Heb. 13:12. It is held by scholars that at the time of Christ the city walls did not enclose the location of this church and that hence tradition may be correct which says that here Christ was buried and rose from the dead. Constantine the Great is reported to have built a church on this spot, knowledge of which the early Christians, so it is held, had kept alive and handed down to posterity. In the course of centuries this church was several times destroyed and rebuilt. Around it a number of buildings have been erected; some form a part of it; Mount Calvary with its shrines is included in this remarkable complex of structures.



St. Stephen's Gate is one of the four gates of the Old City through which cars and trucks can pass. The ancient mode of travel is still in vogue today. The gate dates back to the 16th century A. D.



Two members of the Royal Irish Fusileers, part of the Jerusalem Garrison, kneel and kiss the Rock of Anointment in the Holy Sepulcher Church, where, it is believed, Christ's body was anointed and wrapped for burial after His crucifixion

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Entering the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, one first is shown a stone on which the body of Christ was laid, so it is said, to be prepared for the burial. Then one steps into the large room which holds the sacred place, the tomb. A shrine or chapel has been constructed over it. One stoopingly enters and from an anteroom goes into the tomb proper, where at the side is a marble covering under which is said to be the place where the Savior's body reposed. Many people, when standing beside it, kiss the marble slab and kneel down to speak their prayers. When this is done without superstition, why should it be criticized?

Leaving the highly decorated tomb, one ascends a flight of steps and stands on Golgotha, or Mount Calvary. Since it is covered with altars and chapels, the original form does not appear. A simple Christian regrets that so much pomp and show cover the places most sacred and dear to him. How we should love to see them in their natural state and then sit down in quiet meditation and thanksgiving! Unfortunately, the devotion of many people flows along a different channel and desires to express itself in costly ornaments. At one place three holes in the rock are shown and said to be the precise spot where the crucifixion took place and the three crosses were erected. Various Christian denominations are represented, pre-eminently the Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox Churches. High up in this complex of buildings the Abyssinian monks have their humble convent. A few steps away from here one sees a beautiful church erected by German Evangelical or Lutheran Christians, *die Erloeserkirche*, the Church of the Redeemer. When our party was in Jerusalem, American Methodists were holding services there for soldiers. In a chapel located in the same complex of buildings, the Arabic Christians who have been gathered through the work of the Schnellers and other Evangelical or Lutheran church workers hold their services.

The Praetorium

When one enters Herod's Gate on the northeast, one is in the immediate neighborhood of the *Arx Antonia*, the barracks of the Roman garrison in the first century, which once upon a time were strongly fortified. The present building, which is like a castle, overlooks the Temple place, as did its predecessor two thousand years ago, and it was here that the memorable episode in the life of St. Paul related in Acts 21 and 22 occurred. Paul had been set upon by a mob when he performed certain ceremonies in the Temple. He was dragged out of the sacred precincts, and his attackers



The Castle of Antonia once stood in this general area (Acts 21:31 ff.). The tower in the center is the minaret of the Mosque of the Dancing Dervishes, a fanatical Moslem sect

were planning to kill him when a Roman sentinel, standing guard on the fort, saw the commotion, gave the alarm, and a group of Roman soldiers rushed down and rescued the Apostle. There followed the moving speech of St. Paul delivered from the steps of the fort.

When I visited the place, Mohammedans in the Temple area were concluding their annual week-long festival, held in honor of Moses. A policeman was watching from the vantage point of the fort. Suddenly there was a strange activity of the officer: he rushed from one opening in the wall to the other to see what was going on in the huge crowd below, and after a few minutes he dashed away, accompanied by several fellow policemen, heavily armed. Afterwards I learned that in the surging mass a Jew who, contrary to the stern Mohammedan regulations, had entered

the Temple area had been killed by the angry Moslem crowds. Another Jew, who likewise had defied the regulations, had been dangerously wounded. What a remarkable incident, paralleling in certain aspects the experiences of St. Paul!

Via Dolorosa

Many scholars hold that it was in the Praetorium just spoken of where Jesus was arraigned before Pontius Pilate and condemned. From this fort, so these scholars believe, there started out the woeful procession taking our Lord to Calvary. The way is called Via Dolorosa, the way of sorrows. Immediately across the street from the Praetorium is the Church of the Flagellation, where, so it is said, Jesus was scourged. Along the Via Dolorosa are shown the so-called stations of the Cross, for instance, the place where Simon of Cyrene was compelled to shoulder the Cross of the fallen Savior and the spot where Jesus addressed the women of Jerusalem. No traveler will forget the picturesque arch which spans this road of sorrows and is called the *Ecce Homo* Arch, commemorating the words of Pilate, "Behold the man!" The narrow road terminates at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

The Temple Area

With much emotion one looks for the place where the Temple of Solomon and its successor, the second Temple, ornamented and enlarged by Herod the Great, stood. It is believed to be the locality where Abraham was ready to perform the act of supreme obedience in sacrificing his own son and where the angel of the Lord told him that the sacrifice was not to be consummated and where a ram was offered instead. The Temple area covers a vast space in the eastern side of the city adjoining the walls. As one mounts these walls, one looks toward the east, down into the Kidron



The Bethlehem Road crosses the western arm of the Hinnom Valley on its way to the Jaffa Gate, a transportation center of Jerusalem. Herod's Palace and Gardens once stood where the walls now crown the top of the slope



Crowds mill around on the Temple area during the Mohammedan Neby Musa (Prophet Moses) Festival. The Dome of the Rock in the background

Valley far below, and opposite one rises the Mount of Olives. The Temple of the Jews was destroyed in 70 A. D. No vestige of it remains, as Jesus had prophesied. Cf. Luke 21:5-6. The Temple area consists of wide open spaces in which two Mohammedan sanctuaries are located. One of them is called the Dome of the Rock, containing the huge stone on which Abraham is said to have erected his altar as he prepared to sacrifice Isaac and where later on, according to tradition, the Ark of the Covenant in Solomon's Temple was placed. It is about fifty feet long, forty feet wide, and the top of it is about six feet above the floor. A grille which has the height of about four feet prevents its being touched by visitors. Mohammed and his followers have appropriated from the Old and New Testament religion what suited their purpose.

The Dome of the Rock (often erroneously called the Mosque of Omar) is undeniably a magnificent structure. Its lower part is octagonal and has a diameter of 150 feet. On this part is placed a round dome of wood whose height is about one hundred feet. The windows are of real artistic beauty, and in the building one sees a profusion of marble and mosaics.

At the southern end of the Temple place stands the Aksa Mosque. The name signifies "the most remote" and dates back to the time when Islam's sanctuaries in Jerusalem were considered the farthest from Mecca. It, too, is a beautiful edifice. Experts hold that it originally was a Christian church erected by the Christian emperor Justinian in the sixth century and later on, by the famous Caliph Omar, turned into a Mohammedan place of worship. As in other mosques, there is no furniture inside except a pulpit, from which instruction is given to the worshipers, and a platform with a reading desk, where the Koran is read in the services. Near the pulpit is a stone which is proudly shown to the



This Mohammedan water carrier brings water in his goatskin "tank" to customers in the Old City. The water is drawn up from the vast reservoirs of the Temple area

visitors because it is said that Christ stepped on it and that the mark of His foot can still be seen.

Since here I am moving in the field of fiction, I might mention, too, that near this stone one sees two pillars which are so close together that passage between them creates difficulty, especially for people of generous proportions. The visitor is told that according to an old legend those that can pass between these two pillars can be sure of reception into Paradise. The place where centuries ago the Psalms of the "sweet singer of Israel" resounded in holy services, and where a greater One than King David, David's Son, taught divine truth, is now the stronghold of a false religion and a pool of silly superstitions. Not far from the Aksa Mosque, and still belonging to the old Temple area, is a museum containing interesting objects illustrative of Arabic life, civilization, and religion.

The Wailing Wall

The Temple area constitutes a plateau somewhat higher than the adjacent section to the west. At the southwest corner one descends by means of steps to a lower level and is brought to a wall which forms at this place the western boundary of the Temple place. It is a venerable piece of masonry whose lower courses, consisting of enormous blocks of stone, must have been laid thousands of years ago and may well have here formed the limits of the Temple precincts in the time of Christ and perhaps even in the days of Solomon. The wall is about 60 feet high and 156 feet long. Our party visited it several times and always found worshippers there — Jews who come here to bewail the downfall of their nation. One cannot view them without being deeply touched as they kiss the cold stones and, saying or reading their litany, move their heads to and fro. It is especially on



The Temple area and Old Jerusalem as seen from the Mount of Olives. Prominent is the Dome of the Rock, which stands over the former site of the Altar of Burnt Offering of the Temple

Friday afternoons, shortly before the Sabbath begins, that the orthodox Jews assemble here. In Ps. 48:12-13 the rejoicing of the old Israelites at the sight of their great city had found eloquent expression. What a difference between then and now! But for these wailers, too, the invitation to join the spiritual Israel and there to find peace and rest is meant.

The Pool of Bethesda

North of the Temple area the modern traveler finds the Church of St. Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary, a pleasant place with a convent and garden, whose chief claim on our attention, however, is that it is said to contain the pool of Bethesda, known from John 5:1 ff. One of the monks, the so-called White Fathers, led our party to steps where one descends a number of feet to a reservoir which once upon a time, so it is held, formed the famous pool. There is hardly any doubt that this is the place where Jesus healed the man who had been ill for thirty-eight years. While at present there does not seem to be any spring there like the one spoken of in the Gospels, this circumstance does not militate against the authenticity of the location because springs of that nature may easily cease to exist or find other outlets. The peace and quiet of the surroundings made a pleasing impression.

Sacred Sites Outside the City Walls

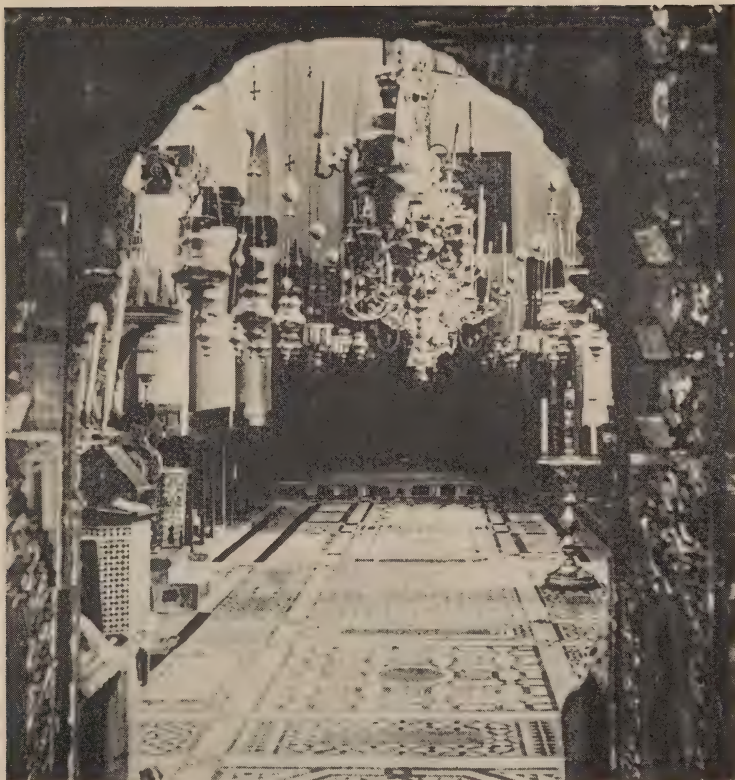
The Upper Room

On the southwestern side of the city one finds the Zion Gate; immediately outside of it is located a building known as the house of Caiaphas. It is asserted that here the nocturnal trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin and the denial of Peter occurred. Close to it one sees a mosque which has a peculiar interest for Christians. Its large room is said to be the upper room in which Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper

and where, so it is held, after His resurrection He appeared to His disciples. Here also, it is believed, they received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Scholars maintain that the tradition very early pointed to this spot as sacred on account of the events mentioned. The visitor must pay a little sum of money to the Mohammedan keeper. Entering, he is required to remove his shoes; sandals are furnished him if he does not like to walk in stockings. What he sees is an empty room which is quite spacious and may well have served as tradition indicates. A spot is pointed to where Jesus and the Apostles sat at table. That the building was not erected as a mosque but as a Christian church, seems clear. Professor Saller of Jerusalem, member of the Franciscan order, with whom I discussed the validity of this place, known as the Cenacle, thinks that its claims are well supported. That the Mohammedans seized it may have been due to a report



The Zion Gate pierces the Old City walls on the traditional Mount Zion. Through skillful maneuvering Arab drivers manage to squeeze busses through its narrow portal



Located on Mount Tabor, most conspicuous mountain in Galilee, is the Church of the Transfiguration, which is in the custody of the Franciscan Fathers. It is built on the scene of the Transfiguration of Christ, where earlier the Crusaders erected a church and monastery, now in ruins. The interior shown here is part of the richly tiled sanctuary, where numerous votive lamps are suspended

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spread somehow as to the nature and content of the area directly beneath the "Upper Room."

Here there is a chamber which the Mohammedans regard as peculiarly sacred and to which they will not admit any people who are not of their faith — the so-called Tomb

of David. In an underground room is said to be a sarcophagus which contains the mortal remains of Israel's famous king. Next to the Cenacle is an apartment where a reproduction of the sarcophagus, covered with a richly embroidered green cloth, is shown. Was David really buried here? Hardly. The city of David in all likelihood lay further to the east. But to discuss the matter would lead me too far afield. After all, our faith does not depend on the correctness of such archaeological views.

The Pool of Siloam

On two sides, to the south and to the east, and partly on the third side, to the west, Jerusalem is surrounded by valleys which form a natural protection for the city. Leaving the Cenacle and going eastward, one travels along the Valley of Hinnom. To the north is Mount Zion, and to the south is the Hill of Evil Counsel, where Judas is supposed to have made his iniquitous offer of betrayal. Continuing in the same direction in the valley one arrives at stern, forbidding cliffs on the right, considerably elevated above the bottom of the valley, Aceldama, the field of blood (cf. Matt. 27:6-8), and whoever wishes to see a real charnel house with multitudes of skulls and other bones, let him enter the cave, which the keeper, a woman, will show him for a little *baksheesh*.

Soon we come to a meeting of valleys: the Hinnom, stretching to the east, is met by the Kidron Valley coming from the north; both join and form one depression extending to the southeast toward the Dead Sea. To the left, on the Jerusalem side, we find the pool of Siloam, where the man born blind, sent there by Jesus, received his sight. (Cf. John 9.) How one enjoys the view of the splashing waters coming through the tunnel of King Hezekiah from the so-called Fountain of the Virgin! In this tunnel the oldest Hebrew inscription in existence was found, dating back to the eighth century before Christ. When the tunnel was hewn out

of the rock, so the inscription says, workmen were laboring in two groups striving to meet each other under ground, and owing to the accuracy of the calculations, they succeeded. Since the length of this underground passage is 583 yards, the feat deserved a special inscription. Adventurous people, now stooping, now crawling, traverse the tunnel up to the fountain which supplies the water. In the Old Testament days this fountain was called Gihon (1 Kings 1:33; 2 Chron. 33:14) and En-Rogel (2 Sam. 17:17; 1 Kings 1:9). It was of utmost importance for the citizens of Jerusalem, who here obtained much of their water. (Numerous and huge cisterns had to be relied on, too.)

Gethsemane

Going northward in the Valley of the Kidron, known also as the Valley of Jehoshaphat, one sees to the left the walls of Jerusalem adjacent to the Temple area and to the



Terraced olive orchards cover a part of the Kidron Valley. In the left foreground is traditional Absalom's Pillar, which dates back to the Greco-Roman period before the birth of Christ (2 Sam. 18:18)

right the Mount of Olives, covered at this place with innumerable graves, the Jewish cemetery. Down in the valley one meets the "Tomb of Zechariah" (cf. 2 Chron. 24:20-22) and, a few yards farther north, the so-called Tomb of Absalom, at which pious Jews throw stones to manifest their abhorrence of the disobedience of this royal prince.

Proceeding a little farther to the north, one arrives at the place dear to every Christian heart, Gethsemane, where the suffering of our divine Savior had its beginning. It is now a place of tranquillity and repose. A little distance up from the bottom of the valley a church and a Franciscan convent have been erected, and with loving devotion the monks tend the sacred spot, caring for its old olive trees and maintaining a most attractive flower garden. Removed from the noise and jostling of the city, one sits down here and meditates on the account of the Savior's agony in the garden and His subsequent imprisonment. That the gnarled olive trees go back to the first century must be doubted; but I do not think it unlikely that these now time-scarred trees grew from shoots that had their origin in the trees which flourished in the days of Jesus. When we visited there, it was approximately at the same time of year, early spring, as in 30 A. D., when Jesus here lay prostrate praying: "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt." The days were warm, the nights very cool.

The Mount of Olives

It is a rather strenuous climb from the Garden of Gethsemane to the summit of the Mount of Olives. A grand panorama opens before the traveler when he arrives on top. The city lies before him with its walls and many interesting buildings, among which he will detect at once the Dome of the Rock and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. He will recall Luke 19:41, with its moving mention of the tears of Jesus at the sight of the city. At this point we are 2,680 feet

above sea level, several hundred feet higher than the city itself. When one looks to the east, the view is no less enchanting. The eye roams over hills and gullies, barren and grotesque, down to the Jordan River and the Dead Sea, the latter lying in a depression 1,300 feet below sea level, and beyond to the hills of Moab, resembling colossal walls of reddish color, guardians of the desert which expands beyond them.

The Mount of Olives is about one mile long. At its northern end it merges into Mount Scopus, which is still higher and is the seat of the Hebrew university. At the southern end and a little to the east must have been the village of Bethphage, where the ass was procured on which Jesus on Palm Sunday entered the city. Not far from the eastern end is a mosque, which is said to mark the spot from which Jesus ascended to heaven. Imagination has even found a stone in the mosque containing the imprint of Jesus' foot when He was taking leave of His disciples. Of other buildings on the Mount of Olives there should be mentioned the Russian tower, gracing a convent, which is visible for many miles; the Church of the Paternoster (the Lord's Prayer), where Jesus is said to have taught His disciples to pray; the Greek Orthodox Chapel of the Ascension, near which we met the patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church; and the Empress Augusta Victoria Hospice, occupied and used as a hospital by the British military before their departure. On the slopes one could see shepherds with their flocks, going about their work undoubtedly much as did the shepherds in the days of David.

The Garden of Gethsemane, located on the slopes of the Mount of Olives outside the wall of ancient Jerusalem, was the scene of Christ's agony on the night preceding His crucifixion. It was from the neighborhood of the Mount of Olives that Christ previously rode in triumph into the city. After the Last Supper He retired with His disciples to the



Garden of Gethsemane. Beyond are the slopes of the Mount of Olives



The Brook Kidron. Concrete walls encase the bottom of the "brook" to curb the angry torrents of the winter rains. The Kidron today lies 75–80 feet higher than that which Jesus crossed



The Southeast Corner of the Temple Area. The lower stones in the wall date back to the days of King Herod. At the left is a path crossing the Kidron



The Garden of Gethsemane and the Mount of Olives. In the background the Russian Church of Magdalene

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quiet Garden of Gethsemane, and there, after hours of mental anguish, He was arrested through the treachery of Judas. The Garden contains eight venerable olive trees which are said to date from the time of Christ. The olive oil yielded by the trees is sold at a high price, and rosaries are made from the olive stones.

The Garden Tomb

Let me take the reader once more to dear, quiet Gethsemane to make it our starting point. Going northward along the Kidron Valley, one passes St. Stephen's Gate of Jerusalem on the left and then arrives at the northeast corner of the city wall forming a right angle. The Kidron, by the way, has water only in the rainy season. We leave the valley and follow the city wall westward. Soon we come upon a splendid plant, the Museum of Palestinian Antiquities, rich in treasures and equipped with an excellent library. We proceed and pass Herod's Gate at our left and now are in the immediate vicinity of our hospitable quarters at the American School of Oriental Research. About 100 yards farther to the west we arrive at a hill known as Gordon's Calvary. The famous English General Gordon, an earnest Bible student who lived in Jerusalem for some time, was of the opinion that the place where Jesus was crucified was outside the present walls. This particular hill appeared to him, as it had appeared to others, to have the form of a skull, and it seemed to possess all the characteristics assigned in Scripture to the place of our Lord's crucifixion. It cannot be denied that the hill, part of which has served as a quarry, strikingly resembles the outline of a human skull. At the northern extremity of it is a garden in which there is a tomb which many people believe to have been the place where the body of Jesus rested from Good Friday to Easter Sunday. The quiet and solitude reigning in the garden make one very sympathetic to the view that here is located the real tomb of Jesus. But, as pointed out before,



Gordon's Calvary



The Damascus Gate is one of the chief gates of the Old City. From it runs the Nablus (Shechem) Road to Galilee and the great trade center of Damascus

scholars hold that the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is erected on a spot which at the time of Christ was outside the city walls, and since an early tradition has designated it as the place of the Lord's burial, they are of the opinion that its claims should be allowed.

A few yards from Gordon's Calvary, a short distance away from the magnificent Damascus Gate, is located the opening of a vast cave known as Solomon's Quarries. The cave extends in various directions underneath the city of Jerusalem and may well have furnished the stones used for Solomon's Temple and palace. Like almost everything else, it has been commercialized, and a caretaker or his boy will for a consideration take the visitor to remote parts and point out places from where the building stones were obtained.



Arabs walk through a market place in Jerusalem's Old City, near where Christ is said to have fallen for the third time on His way to Calvary. This scene was then outside the city walls

RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE PHOTO

Bethlehem

“LET US TAKE THE BUS to Bethlehem,” we said the first Sunday afternoon which we spent in Palestine. The little town is located about six miles from Jerusalem, lying directly south of it. At the picturesque Jaffa Gate we boarded a bus, and soon, having crossed the Valley of Hinnom, we were well on our way. One passes a cistern, called the Well of the Magi (the Wise Men from the East). Not far from Bethlehem the traveler sees Rachel’s Tomb (cf. Gen. 35:16-20). Then David’s Well appears, the waters of which were alluring in the imagination of the young leader. (Cf. 2 Sam. 23:13-17.)

Entering Bethlehem, one sees to the east enormously deep valleys, where the hillsides are carefully terraced and thus made to produce grain and various fruits. The town itself, lying on a high ridge, presents a pleasing appearance. The inhabitants, with few exceptions, are Christians, and the streets are fairly clean. The number of inhabitants is about 10,000. There is an Evangelical or Lutheran church here, in which services are conducted in the Arabic language. The inhabitants are given to agriculture, cattle and sheep raising, and to the manufacture of mother-of-pearl articles.

But the reader wishes to hear about the birthplace of Christ. A very ancient church, probably the oldest in existence, the Church of the Nativity, is the visitor’s objective. It was erected over the cave which, so it is held, formed the stable of the inn which had “no room” for Mary and Joseph. We are told that Constantine, the first Christian emperor,



The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem

RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE PHOTO

had it built. To enter the church one must stoop, because the door is only a few feet high. Mohammedan horsemen, it is said in explanation, to show their contempt of Christianity, used to ride unceremoniously into the church. To prevent these outrages, the door was walled up to such an extent that no man on horseback can enter it. The church itself is rather gloomy; no pews are in it; opposite the door is an altar with gorgeous ornaments. Underneath the "choir" is a grotto, to which one descends by either one of two staircases. In it, always illuminated by expensive lamps, is a spot which contains a silver star around which one reads in Latin: "Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary." Not far away is an excavation in the wall, which is said to be the manger where the infant Jesus was laid. Costly decora-

tions, marble slabs, silver lamps, abound in the same degree as all pomp was absent when the divine event occurred. Leaving the Church of the Nativity and looking at it, one must bear in mind that it is only one unit in a complex of buildings containing Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Armenian monasteries.



Five miles from Jerusalem is the town of Bethlehem, the place of Christ's birth, which has existed without change during thousands of years. Chief Christian shrines are the Church of the Nativity, over the reputed site of the manger; the Franciscan Monastery; and the Milk Grotto, or Women's Cavern, where, according to tradition, a drop of the Virgin's milk fell on the floor when the Holy Family took refuge there. Near by is the field of the Shepherds, said to be the spot where the angels appeared to the
Shepherds on the first Christmas



The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, from which Christmas Services are annually broadcast. Parts of it date back to the 4th century A. D.



The time-honored garb of the women of Bethlehem. The domed headdress is found only in Bethlehem and dates back to the days of the Crusaders



Manger Square in Bethlehem. The building in the left background is a Mohammedan mosque. Bethlehem is traditionally a Christian village



Souvenir Shops off Manger Square. Bethlehem is known for its lace and mother-of-pearl industry.—The male garb harks back to David's time

With thrilled emotions one proceeds to the east to descend to the shepherds' field. The traveler leaves Bethlehem, passes through the little village of Beit Sahur, with its Evangelical or Lutheran school, constantly moves downward, and finally arrives in the plains several hundred feet lower than the town. A grotto, in this instance a subterranean chapel, marks the traditional place where the shepherds heard the glad news: "To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Scholars have pointed out that the considerably lower altitude of the field may not be without significance, but may explain why even in winter shepherds would not find these fields too cold for their flocks. Near by is the field of Boaz, where Ruth gathered ears of grain. In this neighborhood it must have been where young David tended his father's sheep and perhaps indulged his passion for music.



A Cave Sheepfold

Hebron

ABOUT 18 miles south of Jerusalem lies Hebron, famous in the history of Abraham and other Old Testament characters. Here, it is often held, Zacharias and Elisabeth, parents of John the Baptist, had their residence. As one travels toward it, the pools of Solomon are passed, three gigantic reservoirs from which in ancient times water was conducted to Jerusalem and which are still in use. The country is hilly, and stones are seen everywhere; nevertheless agriculture is carried on quite successfully. After various places of historic interest have been passed, we arrive at Hebron, now a town of about 20,000 people, nearly all of whom are Moslems. On account of its many groves and gardens it looks inviting as it lies in the fertile plain. Here, covered by a mosque, is located the cave Machpelah, in which the old patriarchs and their wives were buried: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah. What a historical spot! Access to the cave is not permitted to non-Moslems. A little outside the city one is shown, in a delightful park belonging to the Russian hospice, the "Oak of Mamre" (Gen. 18:4), a venerable tree, to be sure, but certainly not four thousand years old. It has to be artificially supported. In this neighborhood Abraham must have lived and received that marvelous visit in which a son was promised him to be born by Sarah. It is a locality of rich, sacred associations. Not far from here is the valley of Eshcol, famous for its grapes (cf. Num. 13:23).



The Plain of Mamre, once the home of Abraham



A well of Beersheba. In the foreground is an unusual well. Water is brought to the surface by a camel pushing a shaft round and round. Through sprocket wheels the shaft turns the bucket chain and brings up the water

Beersheba

GOING SOUTH from Hebron, one passes through country famous for the clashes between the Philistines and the Israelites and associated with the valorous deeds of Samson and David. The reader can be sure that our party viewed with deep interest the valley of Elah, where Goliath defied Israel and was overcome by a shepherd lad's sling. Old Lachish, a remarkable mound, a veritable mine of archaeological treasures, received our admiring visit. But Beersheba was our chief objective in the southern part of Palestine. Bible readers know of the place from its connection with the story of the patriarchs (cf., for instance, Gen. 21: 22-32) and, among other things, through the expression "from Dan to Beersheba," the latter place marking the southernmost point of the land of Israel. It is a village of about 2,000 people, where Oriental life has quite well preserved its pristine characteristics. Here one sees colorful sheiks, their swords dangling down at their sides; Arabic women with a strange facial equipment, a pendant which hangs down from the brow over the nose and to which a veil is attached; camels heavily loaded for the journey through the desert, etc.

At the southern extremity one sees a sign "To Egypt." Here the desert begins in full earnest; nothing but a sandy waste is to be seen as one looks toward the south. Of special interest in Beersheba are the wells located there. Some of them are abandoned, but we found at least one that still furnishes water. Beersheba was and is an oasis in an arid country. One can understand its importance for people devoted to the raising of cattle and sheep, like the patriarchs.

Gaza

ON THE EAST COAST, northwest of Beersheba, lies the Philistine town Gaza, a city of about 20,000 inhabitants, well known to Bible readers through the story of Samson, who here, a prisoner of the Philistines, found his avenging death (cf. Judges 16:21-30). It is now a Mohammedan town, and the fanaticism of these people is not a pleasant thing to contemplate. Located on several eminences, it is separated from the beach by sand dunes. Its harbor is an attractive spot. The people make a living through the manufacture of lace and pottery and through weaving. An Anglican hospital is located here, whose superintendent, an able and consecrated physician, ministers not only to the physical, but to the spiritual needs of his patients.

In connection with Gaza we visited Askelon, another Philistine city, a little farther north on the east coast. It is now nothing but an area of ruins. The archaeologist revels in the rich remains of antiquity which are observed here. Of special significance are columns and statues which adorned buildings erected by Herod the Great. When one considers that at the time of the Crusades, 800 years ago, Askelon was still a grand, flourishing city, the fleeting character of man and his works is vividly brought home to us.



Two miles southeast of Jerusalem on a curve in the Jericho Road lies Bethany, the home of Mary and Martha



Bethany, now El Azariyeh, recalls the memory of Lazarus. The spire in the background is near the traditional site of the tomb of Lazarus

Jericho

LET US BEGIN our trip this time on the Mount of Olives. When we have traveled about a mile to the southeast, we come to Bethany, the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Here one is shown "the Tomb of Lazarus," into which the visitor descends by twenty-five steps. Not far away lies in a dilapidated state a dwelling called the house of Mary and Martha. The village is not a credit to the country, being squalid and unprogressive.

The road takes us steadily downward through the Wilderness of Judea, an indescribably desert, rocky country; the distance to be covered is about twenty miles. One can understand that this territory until recent times was a paradise for robbers, who in the caverns and among the cliffs found ideal hiding places. Presently we reach on a hill the inn of the Good Samaritan, where refreshments can be bought. Jesus may have had in mind an inn located in this neighborhood when He told the story found Luke 10:30-37. Our Lord and His disciples must have traveled this road a number of times.

Rocks and sand meet the eye everywhere, and it is but rarely that in a valley one sees a verdant spot. The old road which we followed took us close to a deep gorge, where pleasant, clear water was running in an open aqueduct, the Wadi el Kelt. Here a Greek Orthodox convent is perched high in the side of a cliff hundreds of feet above the floor of the valley. What a place to escape from the world and its temptations! But alas! the human heart remains the same, even when its owner has retreated to a lonely cave in this

inhospitable region. It is held by some scholars that here we have the brook Cherith (1 Kings 17:3), where Elijah hid and was fed by ravens.

A few miles more, and we have traversed the hilly section of the road and arrived at the plains of Jericho. A vast expanse stretches out before us; to the left we see the Jordan coming down from the north; in front of us lies the present Jericho, and to the right, sparkling with its smooth blue surface, one can contemplate the Dead Sea. The plain is well watered, and being located about one thousand feet below the sea level, has an almost tropical climate. Palms and banana trees flourish, so do the vine and the fig tree; vegetable gardens are of surprising fertility.

Immediately after the hills cease, the ruins of Herodian Jericho appear, where Zacchaeus lived and Jesus, on entering the city, healed a blind beggar. Proceeding towards the northeast in the plain, we come to the present Jericho, likewise in existence at the time of Christ; leaving which, He gave sight to another beggar. Turning to the north, we arrive at a grand fountain called that of Elisha (cf. 2 Kings 2:19-22), near which is a large mound containing the ruins of the Jericho of Joshua's time. With amazement one sees here the remains of the walls brought down at the sound of the trumpets on the day when Israel, according to the Lord's command, marched around the city seven times. Cf. Josh. 6:20. A distance to the west of Elisha's spring, where high hills mark the boundary of Jericho's pleasant valley, one sees the Mount of the Temptation. It is a steep and majestic hill and has its name from the assumption that on it occurred the temptation of Jesus after the forty days' fasting in the wilderness. Halfway up its side convents have been constructed in the cliffs, access to which is quite difficult.

Jericho has several Christian churches, also hotels, which are well patronized in winter, when Jerusalem is cold.



Jericho, the "city of palm trees," and the bleak hills of the Judean Wilderness. The mountain in the center is called "The Mount of Temptation"



The traditional Mount of Temptation as seen from the ruins of Old Testament Jericho. An unfinished monastery crowns the legendary site



The Wilderness of Judea. On this road the man going down to Jericho fell among the thieves



Herod's glittering city of Jericho once clothed this plain. A fortress crowned the center peak to control the important Jericho-Jerusalem Road

The Jordan and the Dead Sea

SEVERAL MILES east of Jericho the traveler comes upon the stream which is richer in sacred associations than any other in the world—the Jordan. Coming down from Mount Hermon, it first flows through Lake Huleh (the waters of Merom), then through the Sea of Galilee, and finally, some 60 miles farther on, it ends its career in the Dead Sea. As rivers go, it is very small; near Jericho its average width may be 130 feet; but, not to speak of other Biblical events, in it our Lord was baptized by John the Baptist; where is there another stream, large or small, that can boast of anything similar? The Jordan is delightfully fringed with willows, tamarisks, and other trees and shrubs, which are all the more welcome because vegetation otherwise is sparse.

Can the scene of Jesus' Baptism be identified? Unfortunately not. The indications in the New Testament record are not sufficient for that purpose. Tradition points to a place not far from Jericho as the site of that sacred event, and pilgrims gather there every year on Easter Sunday to bathe in the river. All that one can say is that in all probability the Baptism of Jesus occurred in this vicinity.

The Dead Sea, which receives the Jordan about ten miles farther down, is certainly one of the most remarkable phenomena that can be studied. It is 46 miles long, and where it is widest, the distance across is nine and a half miles. It lies 1,300 feet below sea level, being unrivaled in that respect among the lakes of the globe. On all sides,

except toward Jericho, precipitous cliffs surround it. It is so salty that fish or other marine creatures cannot live in it and that the waters carry a bather without any effort on his part. Near the place where the Jordan enters, huge plants have been installed, which extract valuable minerals from the sea. Sodom and Gomorrah, witnesses to the sternness of God's wrath, lay at what now is the southern end of the depression. Near the northern end, on the eastern side, rises Mount Nebo, from which Moses surveyed the promised land, which he was not to enter. Likewise on the east side, farther down, the river Arnon pours its sweet waters into the lake, where they quickly evaporate. This evaporation, by the way, accounts for it, that in spite of the mass of water furnished by the Jordan and other streams, the Dead Sea does not appreciably increase in size. The Arnon River forms the boundary between the mountains of Moab, which lie to the south of it, and the mountains of Gilead, which extend toward the north.



The author at the traditional site of the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan

Schechem

LEAVING JERUSALEM at the Damascus Gate and going northward, we pass the site of Nob (1 Sam. 21:1), famous through the early history of David. To the left, lying on a high hill, towering up to 2,933 feet, one sees from afar the ancient Mizpeh, where the Israelites gathered in the days of the Judges (cf., for instance, Judg. 20:1). It is now called Nebi Samwil (the Prophet Samuel) because of the associations this renowned Prophet and leader had with it. Not far from it lies El Kubibeh, which is 60 stadia, that is, about eight miles, from Jerusalem, and is prominently identified as the old Emmaus (Luke 24:13). Our first stopping place, when we made the trip, was El Bireh (well or cistern), with a picturesque fountain, to which many women came with jars on their heads to fetch water. Adjoining it is the Christian town called Ramallah, which is the seat of a well-known Quaker school. It is in this neighborhood that Joseph and Mary, returning from Jerusalem after the visit there, together with the twelve-year-old Jesus, are thought to have discovered, when nightfall came, that Jesus had not left the city with their group.

Continuing northward, one can see on the right the neighborhood of Bethel, where Jacob in a dream saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven (Gen. 28:1-19). Not far away is the highest point in Southern Palestine, Tel Azur, reaching an altitude of 3,518 feet. Soon the road takes us into an interesting gorge with a horrible name, Valley of

the Robbers — an appellation which once upon a time is said to have been justified. Beyond it a wide fertile valley opens, where agriculture and gardening seem to be very successful. By and by Shiloh can be seen, lying a little distance from the highway to the right, the place where the tabernacle was erected when the Children of Israel had taken possession of the Promised Land. Here, too, nature was smiling when we made our visit. Then, as the road follows a high ridge, suddenly a startlingly verdant valley becomes visible immediately below; the town at the edge is El Lubban (the old Lebonah). When we traveled here, the wild flowers, especially the Palestinian poppy and anemone, were at their best. We were amazed to see the startlingly deep scarlet of these little plants.

Another ten miles are traversed, and we enter a plain on which the mountains of Samaria look down. To the left is Mount Gerizim, the holy mountain of the Samaritans, and



These women are approaching the village well of Beeroth (El Bireh). The El Bireh area is known for its colorful variety of the ancient dress



This forbidding gorge breaks into the Judean plateau (highland) near Anathoth, the home of Jeremiah, about three miles northeast of Jerusalem.



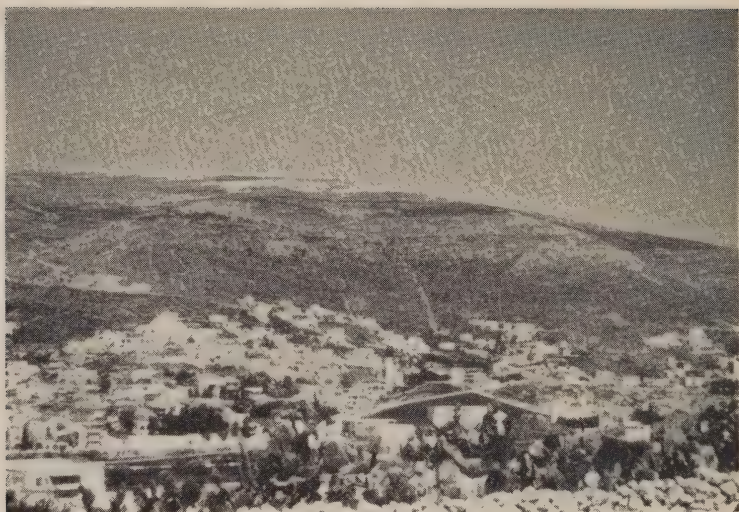
The Nablus (Shechem) Road crosses the Plain of Lebonah (Lubban). The ancient village of Lebonah nestles on the lower slopes



The Shepherd watering his sheep in the "hill country of Judea" near Hebron



Olives thrive in the stony soil of Palestine. Here the shimmering green of olive orchards clothe the terraced slopes of the so-called "Valley of the Robbers" on the Nablus (Shechem) Road



In the Vale of Shechem and on the slopes of the twin peaks of Ebal and Gerizim sprawls the modern town of Nablus (Shechem)

next to it Mount Ebal. Near them lies the old city of Shechem, where excavations have been carried on, and in front of it Jacob's Well. The town of Sychar was in the immediate vicinity. As we stopped at this well, which now is surrounded by buildings erected by devotional zeal, the story of John 4 came vividly before us with its chief characters: the Savior, the Samaritan woman pointing to Mount Gerizim, the disciples, and the group of Samaritans coming out of the city. The well is indeed very deep. An ugly modern contrivance for drawing the water has been installed, and one's imagination has to exert itself mightily to produce the scene that could be witnessed here some 1,900 years ago. But about the genuineness of the place and the tranquil beauty of its location there can be no question. In its vicinity lies Joseph's Tomb. (Cf. Joshua 24:32.)

Following the highway as it turns westward, one passes between the Mountains Gerizim (on the left) and Ebal (on

the right), where the impressive responsive speaking commanded Deut. 27:12 ff. took place. (Cf. Joshua 8:33.)

Soon one enters a modern city of considerable size lying at the foot and on the slopes of Mount Gerizim, Nablus, a corruption of Neapolis (new city). It is a prosperous, chiefly Mohammedan city of about 15,000 people. Ascending to the southern part of it, one arrives at the synagogue of the Samaritans, who now number 270 persons and still have a high priest. We photographed the high priest in his robes in the synagogue as he stood beside the old manuscript containing the five books of Moses, the Samaritan Pentateuch. I ought to add that the Samaritans accept only these books of the Old Testament. Their manuscript, they maintain, dates back to the times before the Babylonian Captivity. The Samaritans still keep the Passover in elaborate services on the top of Mount Gerizim, where their sanctuary was located in Old Testament days.



The Samaritan high priest in front of his synagogue. About two hundred Samaritans still live in Nablus (Shechem) and worship on Mount Gerizim

Nazareth

WHEN ONE HAS LEFT Samaria, the road takes the traveler through an attractive countryside to Dothan, 20 miles north of Samaria. Here one thinks of the story of young Joseph, who came to this place from Hebron in the south looking for his brothers and who here was sold to merchants taking him to Egypt. One sees that the sons of Jacob must have covered a wide area in their pastoral activities. Proceeding, we see Mount Gilboa to our right, where the lives of Saul and Jonathan terminated in a disastrous battle; to the west Mount Carmel, a huge mass more than 20 miles long, fills the horizon. We are traveling now through the plain of Jezreel, known likewise as the plain of Esdraelon, a fertile expanse covered with wheat fields and many a time during the centuries drenched in blood. Soon we see a hill called the little Hermon, and beyond it, to our right, lies Mount Tabor, a very peculiar cone rising out of the plain, thought by some people to have been the mountain of the Transfiguration.

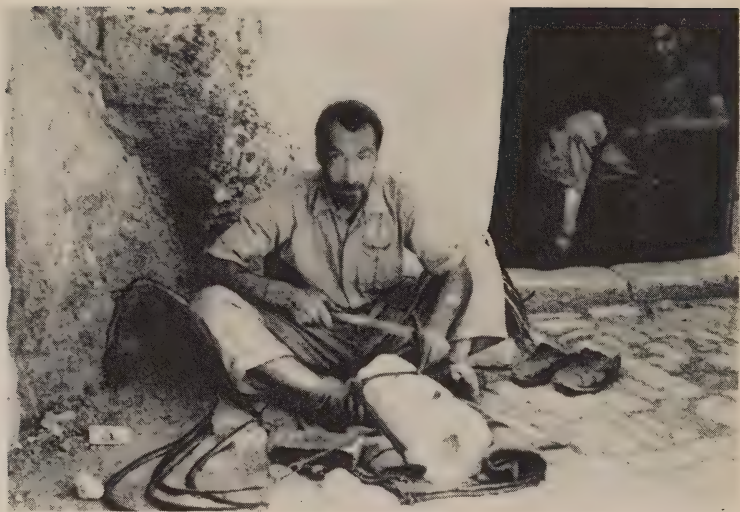
Gradually the hills to the north become more distinct, and our chauffeur says: "The town on the hill in front of us is Nazareth." There it nestles, visible for many miles, near the summit on the upper slopes of Galilee's hills, high above the plain, the town where Jesus spent by far the greater part of His earthly life. We enjoyed our stay in Nazareth. It is an attractive city of about 10,000 people, many of whom,



Houses of Nazareth are terraced up the slopes of the hills of the town

if not most, are Christians. With special interest one visits the spring over which a Greek Orthodox church has been built and from where water is led to a public fountain. Since it is the only spring in the town, we can be sure that Mary came here to obtain water for the household. A Franciscan monastery contains the Church of the Annunciation, where in a grotto the place is shown at which the Virgin is said to have received the extraordinary message of her having been chosen to be the mother of the Savior. Not far away is an old synagog, where the young Jesus is said to have worshiped. A chapel displays the *mensa Christi*, the table of Christ, a large stone around which Jesus and His disciples are said to have gathered at their meals.

The hill of the Precipitation, said to be the eminence from which the angry citizens of Nazareth attempted to hurl Christ, is about two miles distant. I rather think that this height must be sought in the hill on which Polish monks are



A blacksmith of Nazareth prepares for the harvest



The bronze worker plies his ancient trade in Nazareth



*A heathen altar in the excavation of the Canaanite stronghold of Megiddo.
The Plain of Esdraelon, the "battlefield of the nations" in background*



A saddle maker of Nazareth fashions a saddle to cover the camel's hump

conducting a boys' school, directly above the town. Not far from it lies a branch of the Syrian Orphanage in Jerusalem. From this hill one enjoys a view of almost unparalleled grandeur: to the west one sees the blue Mediterranean, Haifa, Mount Carmel, and in front of the latter, at the edge of the plain of Esdraelon, the ruins of Megiddo, excavated by the University of Chicago; to the south the fertile Plain of Esdraelon, or of Jezreel, and beyond it the mountains of Samaria; to the southeast cone-shaped Mount Tabor and the little Hermon and Gilboa; to the east the depression of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan, and beyond it, clearly discernible, the mountains of Gilead; to the north majestic, snow-covered Mount Hermon and, nearer by, the picturesque hills of Galilee. It is an overwhelming panorama — one on which the eyes of Jesus may have rested many a time.

A little note on Megiddo should be added. It lies on a large mound governing the road leading from the south to Phoenicia. The ruins are of unique magnitude, interest, and importance. Here one sees laid bare places of worship that preceded the days of Abraham. Then one beholds remains that date back to the occupation of the Egyptians. By and by one comes upon walls and columns that are held to have been produced in the days of Solomon. (Cf. 1 Kings 9:15.) The visitor is shown pillars to which the horses of the king were tied. (Cf. *ibid.*, 10:26, 28, 29.) Next, parts of structures are shown that originated in the Baal worship of Ahab and Jezebel, and thus the centuries march past us, exhibiting their relics.

About four miles northeast of Nazareth lies Cana, known to all of us through the miracle which Jesus performed when He attended a wedding in that place, turning water into wine. It is a rather small village, but we found it interesting. Several Christian churches are located there. When we rang the bell at the Roman Catholic parsonage,



Cana of Galilee nestles on a hillock, fringed by orchards of pomegranates

a priest at once appeared and in a friendly way took us into the chapel, which was built to commemorate the miracle of Jesus. In a crypt, claimed to be the place where the "virgin water saw its Lord and blushed," big jars were shown. Our guide was candid and frank enough to state that the claim was not made that these were the jars in which the Savior's miracle occurred, but merely that they were old and undoubtedly like the jars of which John 2 speaks.

The village fountain, when the evening sun was beginning to approach the horizon, was a lively place. Many women and girls came there with jars on their heads, walking as straight as any physical culture enthusiast could wish, and they returned our curiosity by being equally interested in our appearance. The village urchins, of course, seemed to think that we had visited the place for their special benefit and honored us with closest attention to every move we made.

The Horns of Hattin

TRAVELING EAST BY NORTHEAST for six miles, one arrives at a peculiarly shaped hill which is called the Horns of Hattin. The strange name is due to slight eminences at both ends of the hill which from a distance create the impression of horns placed on its brow. It is on the slopes of this hill that, as one tradition says, Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, contained in Matt. 5—7 and Luke 6:20-49. The Crusaders, whose army 88 years before had captured Jerusalem, were utterly routed on this hill in 1187, when they here made a desperate last stand against the Mohammedans led by the famous Sultan Saladin. It became evident again that the Kingdom of God is not to be extended by force of arms and that its success does not depend on the victories of armed hosts.

The question whether this was really the hill where Jesus preached the grand discourse known as the Sermon on the Mount, I myself am inclined to answer negatively. There is nothing in the Scriptures that would favor such an identification, and the tradition which gives this hill the distinction in question is of a rather late origin. But it is worth remembering that "the way of the sea," a road leading to the west and south and north, passed this remarkable hill.

Beth-Shan

WHEN A PERSON LEAVES the heights of Nazareth and descends to the plain of Esdraelon or Jezreel, a road will take him past Nain, where Jesus raised the widow's son (Luke 7: 11-17); then he will enter the valley of Jezreel, which runs southeast down to the Jordan. On the right he will pass at the foot of Mount Gilboa the famous fountain where Gideon, following God's direction, selected three hundred men for his little army, choosing those who had drunk out of their hands (cf. Judges 7:1 ff.). The spring furnishes a great abundance of water; its site, shaded by enormous fig trees, is a delightful spot. At this fountain a communistic Jewish settlement of the kind called Kibbutz is located. The Kibbutzim (plural) are constituted in such a way that the individual does not own any property; the colony owns everything; there is one treasury from which all expenses are defrayed. The inhabitants are assigned the work for which they are fitted. Thus our informant, a young man of about thirty-five, who had come from Austria, served as the village carpenter. Another person has the position of cobbler of the community, etc. The children are placed in charge of a nurse who takes care of them all the time with the exception of a little period in the afternoon, when the parents may take them to their homes. Our carpenter was confident that the undertaking, which is one of a large number of like or similar projects, will endure, our doubts notwithstanding.



In the foreground is Nazareth and its small plain. Beyond, in the background, are the Hill of Moreh ("Little Hermon") and Mount Gilboa



Gideon's Brook, at which 300 choice men were selected for the night attack against the Midianites

Continuing in the Valley of Jezreel, we arrive at the region where the plain or the valley of the Jordan begins. It is here that an ancient city is located which played an important role in the political vicissitudes of Palestine — Beth-Shan, or Beth-Shean, now called Beisan. In antiquity it had, in addition, a Greek name, Scythopolis, that is, the city of the Scythians. It was a strongly fortified place, and when the Israelites conquered Palestine, they were not able to dislodge the Canaanites who lived there. After the dire defeat of Israel by the Philistines on Mount Gilboa, where Saul and his sons perished, the enemies fastened the bodies of the king and his sons to the walls of Beth-Shan — a proof that the enemies of Israel were still in control of the stronghold (cf. 1 Sam. 31:10-13). Several centuries later, Scythians, hailing from the region of what now is southern Russia, invaded this country and occupied the city, hence the name Scythopolis. But more astounding than anything mentioned in the preceding sentences is that the Egyptians once upon a time were in possession of this locality and here built several temples. Apparently this came about in the very period when Israel in Egypt was suffering oppression. The early history of Beth-Shan has been demonstrated in the excavations which have been conducted by the University of Pennsylvania. That the place held such attractions for conquerors becomes intelligible when one considers that one of the roads between Damascus and Egypt led past this city and that hence the ruler who possessed this stronghold was master of one of the important trade routes of the world. In the days of Jesus the Romans naturally were the sovereigns of this city. But it is interesting to observe that Beth-Shan, or Scythopolis, though lying on the west side of the Jordan, politically in that era was a part of the federation known as Decapolis, the union of the ten cities, mentioned, for instance, Mark 7:31, most of which lay east of the Jordan.

The Sea of Galilee

WITH EAGER ANTICIPATION we awaited the first glimpse of the Sea of Galilee, known also as Lake Gennesareth, Sea of Tiberias, and in Old Testament times as the Sea of Chinnereth. About five miles below the Sea of Galilee the Jordan receives a tributary coming from the east through a picturesque mountain country, the river Yarmuk. A power plant which has been installed to utilize the water power of the Jordan came into view. Not far beyond it we beheld the beautiful expanse of water known as the Sea of Galilee. The Jordan enters it at the north and leaves it at the southern extremity. First we looked at the clear stream as it emerges from the lake. Then we surveyed the lake itself. As we looked across it from the southern end, one expression of joy after the other escaped us. We had arrived at the sea on the shores of which a great part of our Lord's ministry was accomplished. To the west, on our left, were hills of considerable height, which gradually receded from the lake, giving way to gentle slopes; to the east, on our right, were stern bluffs, which appeared rather precipitous as they rose above the sea; and to the north was the grand snow-capped mountain Hermon, called "the sheikh" by the Arabs, rising high into the sky to an altitude of 9,700 feet. This grand peak is located about thirty or forty miles distant from the lake, but in the clear, dry atmosphere it appeared to be but a few miles away. The Sea of Galilee has a length of fourteen and a width of six miles. It abounds in fish. Its color, when we saw it, usually was bewitchingly blue.



The lordly camels rest against the majestic backdrop of Mount Hermon



These waters of the Yarmuk rush onward to join the Jordan River four miles south of the Sea of Galilee. Today the Yarmuk has been harnessed to generate electricity for Palestine



These rushing waters from the snows of Mount Hermon join others to form the Jordan River. — The Mount of Dan lies to the right, and beyond are the foothills of Mount Hermon

Its strangest feature is that it lies 680 feet below the level of the sea. The climate is rather warm, and we found tropical plants, like palm trees, growing there. In the days of Christ the shores of the lake were covered with populous towns and villages. It must have been a very live and attractive picture that He beheld when He traveled about in this region: artisans, farmers, and fishermen vied with one another in making a living, groups of happy children played in the market places, and the aged enjoyed the shade of the fig trees. Today the country is not cultivated as it could be, and there is only one town of some size to be seen: Tiberias. The villages, all of them unimpressive or rather squalid, are few in number. The blight of Turkish misrule, which lay on the country for centuries, has not entirely disappeared.

I hope the reader will not find me presumptuous if I now submit a few stanzas which I wrote after our various visits at the sea.

Mid the hills of Galilee
Pearl-like lies its gleaming sea.
Nature's gifts are rich and choice;
Sweeter was the Master's voice
When He spoke along the sea
To the folk of Galilee.

"Are you weary and oppressed?
Come to Me and find sweet rest:
All your sins are here forgiv'n,
Open is the gate of heaven."
Thus He spoke along the sea
Mid the hills of Galilee.

What a symbol you can be,
Little Sea of Galilee!
Down from Hermon's ice and snow
To your wide bed waters flow.
How they hasten in free glee,
Glad to form you, shining sea.

And the waters you receive
Freely you again do give.
To the south you soon send forth
Gracious waters of the north.
Jordan's stream flows merrily
From the Sea of Galilee.

To the east stern cliffs behold;
Here ungrateful folk, we're told,
Lost the herd they highly prized,
Loving riches more than Christ.
Do we all the lesson see
Taught us here near Galilee?

When life's tempests o'er us break,
And in fear our spirits quake,
May we see the Savior's form
Halting dashing wave and storm,
Saying, I will calm thy sea,
Like the Sea of Galilee.

Tiberias

SEVERAL MILES TO THE NORTH of the place where the Jordan leaves the Sea of Galilee, on the west side of the lake, one finds Tiberias. Coming from the south, one first arrives at hot springs, which have been famous from the days of antiquity. Bath houses have been constructed there; the water of the springs runs at the side of the road, and the visitor can convince himself, putting his hand into it, that it is extremely hot. The medicinal value is said to be considerable. Soon Tiberias itself is reached. It is a town of about 9,000 people, lying on heights rising from the sea. Because in recent years many Jews have come there from Europe, certain sections have the pattern of Western civilization; in the center of the town, for instance, there is a park, which is well kept and abounds in gorgeous flowers. There are ruins here dating back to the days of Herod Antipas, who built the city. The Gospels do not report that Jesus ever visited it. Pious Jews shunned it because Herod Antipas had built it on an unclean place, a cemetery. Later on, however, this prejudice was overcome, and Jews settled there in large numbers. After the destruction of Jerusalem, in the second century of our era, it became the center of Judaism; a flourishing school of Jewish theological learning came into existence there; it served as the seat of the Jewish chief council, the Sanhedrin, and later on its learned men issued that edition of the *Talmud* which is known as the *Jerusalem Talmud* and which, like its brother, the *Talmud of Babylon*, con-



The waters are blue and clear as the Jordan leaves the Sea of Galilee



"The catch" from the waters of the jewel-like Sea of Galilee

stitutes an enormous collection of Jewish religious lore. The Christians in Tiberias today are few in number.

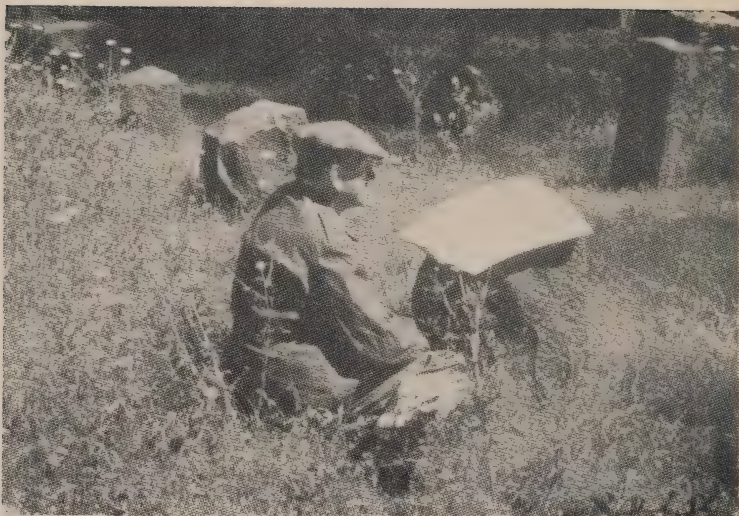
On the heights above the town we were delighted with the great number of wild flowers which still greeted the traveler. The sight of them vividly brought to mind the striking words of Jesus about the lilies of the field (Matt. 6:28).

When we visited here, a group of fishermen at our request, or rather, induced by the pay we offered, somewhat south of Tiberias put their huge dragnet into the lake for a catch of fish. The effort was not barren of results, a number of fish were caught. It was a remarkable thrill to see these men at work and then to think of Peter and Andrew, James and John, fishing at our Lord's order and enclosing so large a catch that the net began to tear. (Cf. Luke 5:1-11.) At one place in this vicinity we saw a man standing in the lake up to his hips and casting a net into the water. It was, of course, a small contrivance, which could be thrown a distance of merely fifteen or twenty feet. It opened when it was thrown, lead weights attached to it made it sink, fish that happened to be under it were taken down with it to the bottom of the lake, and then a jerk at a cord drew the edges of the net together, forming it into a sack, and the fish that were caught in it could be drawn toward the fisherman and be brought to land. The Greek word (*amphibleestron*) used in the narrative Matt. 4:18 of the fishing done by Peter and Andrew indicates that on this occasion they were using a throw net.

Capernaum

OUR JOURNEY took us from Tiberias northward on the west side of the lake past various interesting localities. There was the site of Dalmanutha, then the little village Mejdél, the ancient Magdala, forever memorable as the place from which Mary Magdalene, one of the most devoted followers of Jesus, hailed. A little distance north a wady or valley opened at the farther end of which the hill known as the Horns of Hattin comes into view. It will be recalled from a previous section that some people hold the Sermon on the Mount was preached on the slopes of this hill. Next we arrived at a plain called Gennesareth. It has given its name to the lake; in the New Testament it is mentioned Matt. 14:34; Mark 6:53. One gets the impression that the land here is extremely fertile, because there is luxuriant vegetation alongside the road. Soon we come to Et Tabigha, a delightful place with a hospice, where in normal times travelers received a friendly welcome. One of the New Testament Bethsaidas may have been located here, the home of Peter, Andrew, and Philip (John 1:44).

A little farther northward lies a hill which is the seat of an Italian nunnery. It commands a splendid view of the lake and is called the hill of the Beatitudes. Beneath it, half a mile or a mile away, lies Tel Hum, the Capernaum of the New Testament. I am of the opinion that it was the hill where Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, an opinion which, as the name indicates, is shared by others.



The author at Capernaum investigating archaeological findings to determine "on location" the most probable date of the synagog ruins. From his "desk" of black volcanic rock he can see and study the impressive synagog remains. The Franciscan Brother in charge of Capernaum thoughtfully provided the open volume, written in French. — It is generally accepted that the synagog ruins date back to the third century A. D.

Finally we arrive at Capernaum itself. There is hardly anything left of the town. One cannot help thinking of Matt. 11:23 in this connection. With its sister cities, Capernaum has disappeared. Its very site for a long time was a matter of dispute. A Franciscan monastery has been erected here, hard by the lake shore; and in the same compound with it, a wall protecting the little area, are located the chief ruins of the city which in the days of Jesus may have numbered from 10,000 to 20,000 inhabitants.

What hallowed ground! Here lay the place known as Jesus' own city (Matt. 9:1). Early in His ministry He stayed here (John 2:12), and when He later on had been rejected in Nazareth, He established His residence in this city (Luke

4:29-31). Capernaum was honored above all other cities. Alas! it, too, did not recognize its day of grace (Luke 10:15). There long was doubt as to the precise location of Capernaum; the excavations of the last decades have fairly conclusively demonstrated that Tel Hum is entitled to being regarded as the site of our Lord's home during His public ministry.

The Franciscan monastery and its environments are a delightful place to visit. Having entered the grounds and passed the monastery, one comes upon a little grove in which numerous ancient utensils, like handmills and vats, are exhibited. Adjacent to it lie the impressive ruins of the synagog of Capernaum; the old structure has been partly restored. There is still some dispute on the question whether the synagog, which one sees here in splendid remains, is the one built by the centurion (cf. Luke 7:2-5), or whether it represents a later structure dating back to the second or



Ruins of the ancient synagog of Capernaum

third century, erected, however, on the foundations laid by the workmen of the centurion. The arguments need not detain us. I obtained from the Franciscan father in charge a book describing the ruins, and then, seated in the grass and in the shade of kindly trees, I tried to identify the chief features of what was to be seen: pillars with Corinthian capitals, stone benches for the "chief seats," carvings showing the seven-branched candlestick, the six-pointed star of David and the five-pointed star of Solomon, olive branches, trumpets, and censers. Some heathen symbols, like eagles, are found, too, indicating probably that, up in Galilee architecture in Jewish circles was not subject to the severe laws of the rabbis that dominated everything in Jerusalem. A few steps to the east of the ruins of the synagog remains of, so it is held, a Christian church have been laid bare. Of special interest is a pavement consisting of mosaics which are well preserved. When we, sitting near the monastery at the very edge of the lake, ate our lunch, we saw innumerable fish, chiefly little ones, disporting themselves in the limpid water. The reader will easily guess some of the thoughts that this sight engendered in us. It was with genuine regret that we bade good-by to the sacred spot.

The Land of the Gergesenes

TRAVELING NORTH, leaving the lake for a short time, one comes upon the ruins of Chorazin, two and one half miles from those of Capernaum. It seems to have been of the same size approximately as the latter; and it, too, did not make use of the privileges it possessed when the Son of God walked through its streets. (Cf. Luke 10:13.) One then returns to the shore and going eastward soon arrives at the place where the Jordan enters the lake. Here there is much moisture, and the grass is green throughout the year. On the east side of the Jordan, up a short distance from the shore, lies Bethsaida Julias, in the neighborhood of which Jesus fed five thousand people, not counting the women and the children. The place is mentioned Luke 9:10. It is there merely called Bethsaida (fish house); but that Bethsaida Julias is the place in question is clear from John 6:1. It lay not in the province of Herod Antipas, that is, in Galilee, but in the territory of his brother Philip, who was in charge of the sections to the east of the Sea of Galilee, for instance, Iturea and Trachonitis (Luke 3:1). This Bethsaida was called Bethsaida Julias (that is, the Bethsaida of Julia), in honor of Julia, the daughter of the Emperor Augustus.

We are now at the northeast corner of the lake, and if we wish to follow its shore on the eastern side, we must turn southward. Today this territory belongs to the Republic of Syria. We are interested in this shore on the east chiefly on account of the events that happened here when Jesus and His disciples had crossed the sea and met two demoniacs, one of whom was particularly violent and was therefore the

only one Mark and Luke took cognizance of. (Cf. Matt. 8: 28-34; Mark 5:1-17; Luke 8:26-37.) At the foot of some cliffs one finds a little village called Khersa, which name in the days of the Apostles may have had the form Gergesa, giving us the word *Gergesenes*. How vividly a person can picture to himself a large herd of swine, panic-stricken, rushing down one of the precipitous cliffs into the sea! As one looks across the sea from Capernaum, there rises for many miles on the other side a row or wall of steep, high hills overlooking the mirror of the lake. And the people asked Jesus to depart! "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not."

Here I have to end my remarks about the Sea of Galilee and its environments. Several times we saw it from the distance when we traveled across the Galilean hills; and always its sight gladdened our hearts and vividly reminded us of the gentle Teacher, the divine Savior, who proclaimed and effected the peace that passeth all understanding.



"The hills beyond the sea" — the land of the Gergesenes

Caesarea Philippi

IT WAS OUR GOOD FORTUNE to be able to drive up to one of the main sources of the Jordan. As one proceeds northward from the Sea of Galilee on its west side, one sees a bridge crossing the Jordan which is called the Bridge of the Daughters of Jacob. The name is founded on fancy and not on historical fact. Soon the stronghold of Hazor comes into view. Its downfall is recorded Joshua 11:1, 10, 11, in the story of the conquest of Canaan by Joshua. Later on it again became powerful, but its army was defeated by Deborah and Barak (Judg. 4:2-17). Here we were abreast of the lower end of Lake Huleh, formed by the Jordan. It is the body of water called the waters of Merom (Joshua 11: 5-7). Its length is four and a half miles, its width three and a half miles. The whole region is swampy, and travelers are warned against malaria infection. There is rich pasturage, and we saw large herds of cattle. The many acres of reeds furnish material for the manufacture of mats. At a spring we were able to detect an Egyptian papyrus plant in a thick cluster of reeds and bulrushes; unfortunately, the ground was so soggy that the plant was inaccessible for us. Lake Huleh is eight feet above sea level. To get to the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan has to fall 682 feet in the course of about 12 miles. Crossing the Jordan above Lake Huleh, one arrives in a fertile plain where waters flow plentifully. Our objective was Dan, now called Tel el Kadi, that is, the Hill of the Judge. This name is based on the word *Dan*, which,



Mat weaving is one of the chief industries of the Upper Jordan Valley (Huleh Basin). Weaving is woman's work. She can weave two mats a day, for which she may receive from 12 to 20 cents

just like *kadi*, means "judge." Here we stood at the northern extremity of the land of the Israelites, which, as we reminded ourselves before, extended from Dan to Beersheba. The tribe of Dan settled here some time after the conquest, as related Judg. 18:26-31. The hill Tel el Kadi is a fascinating landmark. It is not very high, but there are trees growing on it and on its slopes in abundance. It is covered with ruins, but its greatest attraction is a spring which issues at its side and is remarkably productive. It is a delight to observe the water gushing forth with a considerable roar. It is, if not the chief, then at least one of the chief sources of the Jordan River.

Not far from Dan begin the foothills of Mount Hermon. It is in this region that the famous Caesarea Philippi, the Caesarea of Philip, is located. We did not visit the place, because it is within the bounds of Syria, and to go there



*Extensive ruins of Caesarea Philippi on the center peak in the background.
The mound in the foreground covers the ruins of ancient Dan*



*Once the Canaanite stronghold, these mountains of Upper Galilee are still
popularly known as the Mountains of the Canaanites*

would have required a special visa, or entrance permission; but we viewed the ruins through our field glasses and convinced ourselves of the superb location which the town enjoyed. On top of a steep hill stood the castle, a mighty stronghold. Down below, at the foot of the hill, is a grand spring, one of the sources of the Jordan, once upon a time believed by the heathen inhabitants to be sacred to Pan, the Greek "god" of the woodlands and the pastures. For us Christians this neighborhood will ever be of the greatest interest for two reasons. Here occurred, as is related several times in the Gospels, for instance, Mark 8:27-30, the great confession of Peter, acknowledging Jesus to be the Son of God and the Messiah. And in this neighborhood there must have taken place that glorious event which is known to us as the Transfiguration, reported, for example, Mark 9:2-13. The mountain where Jesus before His suffering was temporarily invested with heavenly majesty is not named in the sacred record; it must have been one of the peaks in the neighborhood of Mount Hermon, whose chief summit rises high above Caesarea Philippi. Or was it the very top of Mount Hermon where Jesus took Peter, James, and John for the remarkable manifestation of His deity? On account of the hardships involved in the ascent and descent, that does not seem likely. Let those who enjoy speculation indulge this propensity. The scenery in this section is inexpressibly grand and awe-inspiring — a fit environment for the demonstration of our Lord's divine nature.

Transjordania

AS THE NAME INDICATES, this is territory that lies on the other side, that is, east of the Jordan. It is a little kingdom ruled over by Abdullah, who is called Abdullah Ibn Ul-Hussein (son of Hussein): his coronation occurred May 25, 1946. The northern boundary of his country is the river Yarmuk, not mentioned in the Bible, which enters the Jordan a little distance below the Sea of Galilee; the eastern boundary is formed by an imaginary line drawn from Abu Hamal, on the Euphrates River, south down to Saudi Arabia; the southern boundary consists in the northern limits of Saudi Arabia, and the western boundary is constituted by the Jordan and the Dead Sea and a line running from there to the Gulf of Sinai. King Abdullah is a Mohammedan, and the great majority of his subjects belong to that religion. The country is highly mountainous; it is picturesque and attractive for the tourist; agriculture is carried on with difficulty. The chief occupation of the people is cattle and sheep herding, and there are many Bedouins to be seen here.

In Old Testament times the region immediately east of the Jordan belonged to the tribes Reuben, Gad, and one half of Manasseh. These two and one-half tribes asked Moses for permission to settle on the east side of the river because they had much cattle, which permission was granted them. (Cf. Num. 32:1-33.) The land occupied by the Israelites was known in its northern section as Bashan and in its southern part as Gilead. By the time of Christ an altogether

different division had come into existence. What is now Transjordanania was in its northern part the region of Decapolis (the ten cities); adjoining it on the south was Perea, governed by Herod Antipas, the same petty prince who ruled over Galilee; and south of Perea was the region of Moab and Idumaea, forming the kingdom of the Nabataeans.



These stately sons of the Transjordan Desert still wear the Biblical dress. Some carry the shepherd's rod and staff. — Houses of Amman are located on terraces up the hillsides

Amman (Philadelphia)

WHEN WE VISITED Transjordan, we crossed the Jordan near Jericho by means of the Allenby Bridge. Here customs had to be attended to, because we were entering a new country. Fortunately we did not have much luggage, and the negotiations were quickly completed. Our visas we had obtained at the Transjordan consulate in Jerusalem. The route on the east side of the river took us soon away from the plains into the hill country through a narrow valley alongside of a little stream which was flanked by the choicest oleander bushes imaginable. Jesus, one is inclined to think, must have traveled and taught in this very region the various times that He was in Perea after His Baptism.

Our first stop was in a town not mentioned in the Bible, Es Salt, a picturesque place of several thousand people where tradition places the tomb of the Prophet Hosea. The inhabitants were friendly, but the boys were so curious and forward that the photographing which our party had contemplated was frustrated.

An hour or two later we arrived at Amman, the capital of Transjordan, a city of about 20,000 inhabitants. It has a favorable location, partly in a valley which is traversed by a little river or creek and partly on the sides of the hills which enclose the area. Here we trod on rich historical ground. In the Old Testament days the city had the name of Rabbah, or Rabbah Ammon; it is spoken of, among other passages, 2 Sam. 11:1; 12:26-31, and it was the stronghold of the children of Ammon. In the third century before Christ an Egyptian king, Ptolemy Philadelphus, took kindly to it, rebuilt its destroyed sections, and gave it the name



Through the streets of Es Salt walk descendants of Esau in the flowing garments of old



These steps once led from the Street of the Columns to the Cathedral Church of Jerash (Gerasa)

Philadelphia. It is apparent that now Greek influence had moved in. In the days of our Lord the city belonged to the league called Decapolis (cf. Matt. 4:25; Mark 5:20; 7:31). This region was partly settled by Greeks and Romans coming from the west and granted special privileges. Christianity early was represented there, only to be all but wiped out when the Mohammedans captured the city.

All the ruling powers have left their traces. When we visited there, we stayed at the Hotel Philadelphia. Immediately in front of it, on the other side of the street, a Greek amphitheater, having a seating capacity of about 6,000, is located. With the exception of the stage it is in an almost perfect state of preservation. Looking out from our hotel window, we saw tiers upon tiers of seats rising to a remarkable height. On the bank of the river one finds immense structures representing Roman baths. On the hill to the north, overlooking the city, is the citadel, with ruins of temples and churches. What does it all mean? Evidently in the era when the Greeks and the Romans occupied the city, they made it a center of culture and entertainment. The delightful, healthful climate must have attracted them. More than likely Jesus and the Apostles beheld some of these imposing structures. What the divine Master taught His students with regard to masterpieces of human art is undoubtedly expressed in the words: "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26.) Jesus never condemns cultivation of that which is beautiful; but He warns against giving it the first place in our existence.

From Amman one may go to Mount Nebo, immediately east of the Dead Sea at its northern extremity. It has a height of 2,643 feet above sea level, and from its summit one can survey the promised land from Mount Tabor in the north to the hills of southern Judea.

Jerash (Gerasa)

FROM AMMAN our trip took us to Jerash, which in antiquity was called Gerasa. We now were in the country made memorable through the journey of Jacob when he returned to Canaan after his twenty years' stay with Laban. It is an intensely picturesque landscape; the hills are steep, and here and there the slopes are wooded like some that I recall in Wisconsin and Minnesota. They are most delightful to behold. In the distance we saw hills that actually appeared to be covered with forests. Gradually we arrived at a splashing little stream, the river Jabbok. See Gen. 32:22.

Ascending and descending, we finally came to Jerash. It is not mentioned in the Scriptures excepting indirectly, inasmuch as it was one of the cities forming the so-called Decapolis, the country in which Jesus fed the four thousand. The ruins of ancient splendor which one beholds here are indeed breath-taking. The city, whose extent was about a square mile, was pleasantly situated on both sides of a charming little river. Coming from the south, one enters through a triumphal arch. Following the main street and passing temples and an amphitheater on the left, one comes to a forum, or public square, most of whose 100 columns are still standing. Then one arrives at the so-called colonnade, extending for a thousand yards through the city, a thoroughfare formerly adorned with 520 high columns, of which 75 can still be seen. To the right and to the left are the remains of pagan temples and baths and arches interspersed with mournful vestiges of Christian churches, all destroyed undoubtedly when Islam came to power.



These Corinthian columns speak of the former glory of Jerash (Gerasa)



The ruins of the north theater of Jerash (Gerasa). The hills of Gilead roll off into the horizon

Jaffa (Joppa)

IN THIS AND SOME FOLLOWING SECTIONS I should like to take the reader down to the Mediterranean coast. When we left Jerusalem for the trip to Jaffa, the route led us in a north-westerly direction past some celebrated localities. The one that fascinated us more than any other was the neighborhood of Beth-Horon, where Joshua spoke the words that were heard by the Lord and granted realization: "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon" (Joshua 10:12). A pass crosses the mountain country here from the east to the west and has been the scene of innumerable struggles and battles. Lydda, which lies inland, I have described in a former section.

When we approached Jaffa, we were traveling in the coastal plain, where orange groves abound and fertility is written on the whole landscape. Near Jaffa begins the famous Plain of Sharon; a maritime area 10 miles wide and about 45 miles long, it extends northward to Mount Carmel. At the time of our trips the countryside, wherever nature had not been interfered with, was covered with wild flowers of brilliant hues. The rose of Sharon must have been among them, dear to us from the pages of the Bible. (Cf. Song of Solomon 2:1.) As to the identity of this flower, scholars are not as yet agreed except that all hold that it is not of our rose family. The most striking flower is the poppy, which in Palestine has a scarlet robe of indescribable richness. Perhaps this is the flower which the Old Testament poem points to in its beautiful metaphor.



The Tower of Ramleh, near Jaffa, was formerly featured on the five-pound-notes (\$20 bills) of Palestine



*The bazaar of Jaffa (Joppa). The graceful minaret recalls that Moham-
medanism is the scourge of Arab lands*

Entering Jaffa, we found ourselves in a strongly Moham-
medan city of about 70,000 inhabitants. A number of Chris-
tian churches and hospitals, however, are to be seen. It
formerly was the chief seaport of Palestine — a distinction
which now belongs to Haifa, 70 miles farther north. Ships
that wish to discharge their cargo or passengers at Jaffa are
at a disadvantage because they cannot cast anchor at the
piers; the water is too shallow, and they have to remain at
a distance from the shore and entrust their transported
burdens to little boats to be conveyed to the land. A bar-
rier of rocks form a little bay; an opening in this barrier
permits the small craft to enter and to leave.

Jaffa up to the seventh century of our era was called
Joppa, and in that form the name occurs in the New Testa-
ment. It was at Joppa that Peter brought back to life Tab-
itha, or Dorcas, a “woman full of good works and almsdeeds”
(Acts 9:36-41). Here he had the glorious vision which
taught him not to let the distinction between ceremonially
clean and unclean persons form an impediment in his mis-
sion efforts. (Cf. Acts 10.) A mosque marks the place where
the house of Simon the tanner, Peter’s lodging place, is said
to have stood. Today there are still many tanners in Jaffa.
The house of Tabitha, too, is shown the visitors. Jaffa’s his-
tory takes us to the early dawn of civilization. The Egyp-
tians and Phoenicians occupied it in the days of their respec-
tive conquests. The Philistines were its masters till the time
of David, who won the city for Israel. From here the cedar
logs, cut in the forests of the Lebanon Mountains and con-
veyed down the coast of the Mediterranean in rafts, were
brought to Jerusalem to be used in the building of Solomon’s
Temple. During the Crusades, Joppa was a prize which
Christians and Mohammedans fought over bitterly. The
old Islamic fanaticism has not entirely died out, but there
is no interference with Christian services.

Tel Aviv

IMMEDIATELY ADJOINING JAFFA on the north, with no intervening space to separate the two communities, lies Tel Aviv. As is well known, the city is a recent creation, having been founded hardly more than twenty-five years ago. What is surprising is that it is now the largest city of Palestine, numbering about 200,000 inhabitants. It is an altogether Jewish city; Zionists, who endeavor to make Palestine an Israelitish country, were its founders. It looks like a prosperous American commonwealth; its stucco houses, though rather uniform in appearance, nevertheless present a pleasing sight in their setting of verdant trees. The beach reminds one of Santa Monica's familiar water front. Schools, libraries, department stores, ice-cream parlors, are found here as in the towns of Europe and America; music and other fine arts are cultivated. The Judaism that is fostered here, if my impressions are correct, is of the worldly type. The Sabbath is kept, but as a day of pleasure; the fire of Jewish pride is kept alive and fanned by racial rather than religious considerations. The veil that Paul speaks of 2 Cor. 3:14-15 is still there, but it consists far more in indifference than in religious prejudice.



Houses of Tel Aviv have ultramodern lines, well adapted to the climate of coastal Palestine



A fisherman of Jaffa (Joppa) carefully mends his net



Jaffa and Tel Aviv as seen from the French Monastery in 1947. From a flat roof such as those in the foreground Peter saw the vision coming down from heaven



The pounding waves of the Mediterranean at a seaside park of Tel Aviv

Caesarea

FOLLOWING THE SEA COAST to the north, after a trip of about 45 miles, we arrive in Caesarea. In Old Testament times it was known as Straton's Tower, and hence, because there are several Caesareas, it is usually spoken of with the addition of this ancient name. It lies directly on the sea, and in the first century it was the residence of the Roman procurators, or governors. While today it is an insignificant village of a few hundred people, in the days of Pontius Pilate it was a splendid city with palaces, baths, theaters, and an important harbor. The reader will by this time be aware that Palestine is poor in harbors. Caesarea has some inadequate natural facilities for serving as a seaport, but Herod the Great, desirous of having a port not far away from Samaria, which he had rebuilt, beautified, and called Sebaste, established Caesarea as a harbor by erecting a breakwater in the sea with a width of 200 feet. As one walks along the coast, one is surrounded by remains of ancient splendor. Many of the ruins, it is true, do not date back to Roman times, but represent structures which were brought into being by the Crusaders.

In some place of this field of ruins stood the fortress where the Apostle Paul was confined for two years when the governor Felix, instead of freeing the innocent messenger of Christ, kept him in bondage because he hoped to be given a bribe (Acts 24:26-27). Here the Apostle began the memorable voyage described Acts 27 and 28. The Book of Acts likewise tells us about the centurion Cornelius, who lived in

this center of Roman power and was brought to a knowledge of the Savior by the preaching of Peter (cf. Acts 10). Another interesting detail the sacred account records is that here the almoner or deacon Philip lived whose four daughters had the gift of prophecy (cf. chap. 21:9). It was in his house that Paul found a hospitable reception when he was on the way to Jerusalem (chap. 21:8-14). The visitor today coming from the east crosses sand dunes interspersed with fertile fields and areas where numberless wild flowers in gayest colors celebrate the season of spring, for this is the plain of Sharon; and then he comes to the ruins which extend for several miles along the coast.

In his reveries, as he reviews the events of the sacred account that came to pass at this place, he will be arrested by the incomparable blue sea and the patter of the waves tirelessly dashing against the old ramparts.



Caesarea was King Herod's glittering port city and capital. Today only ruins remain of its former greatness. Waters of the Mediterranean hide columns which once adorned its harbor

Mount Carmel

OUR TRIP TAKES US NORTHWARD to the end of the plain of Sharon. While in the first century of our era and later, till about 800 years ago, this area was covered with forests, it now is treeless except in the locality where groves have been planted and a few isolated spots besides. Sixteen miles north of Caesarea we come to the ruins of a town that played an important role in the history of the Crusades, Athlit, having been a strong fortress built and long held by Christian warriors. In 1291 the Mohammedans captured and destroyed it. As we stand at Athlit facing north, Mount Carmel is on our right. A remarkable mountain it is; it has a length of about 22 miles, and while the height is not uniform, it at places reaches some 1,800 feet, and its width ranges from three to five miles. Regardless of the direction from which the traveler approaches it, the mountain fills the horizon as a mighty barrier wall, and when once seen, it is unforgettable. The slopes, generally speaking, are green with trees and shrubs, presenting an inviting appearance.

Who does not at once recall the dramatic significance of this mountain in Elijah's history? Here he challenged the priests of Baal, as recorded 1 Kings 18:17-39, and afterwards, when they were defeated, led them to slaughter (v. 40). It was from here that the prophet's servant saw a little cloud, like a man's hand, arising out of the sea, which presaged the end of the drought (cf. vv. 41-45). Today there are monasteries and churches to be found here in-



Mount Carmel comes within 200 yards of the Mediterranean. The highway leads to the modern port of Haifa on the northern side of Mount Carmel



Of interest is the center peak, on which tradition states the famous contest between God and Baal took place

tended to commemorate the thrilling events related in the sacred record.

On the northern slopes of Mount Carmel and in the plain at its base lies Haifa. No one can deny that its location is beautiful. The Mediterranean here has consented to furnish a bay which forms a graceful curve and at whose southern end one finds Haifa, while at the northern extremity Acre is situated. Since Mount Carmel sends a protecting spur into the sea which can serve as a breakwater, we here have some features of a natural harbor. Whatever is offered in this respect has been enhanced by engineering skill, and through spending several million pounds sterling the British have succeeded in making Haifa an acceptable port.

Haifa is a city with a motley population, consisting of Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians. The latter are comparatively few. The number of inhabitants is about 100,000. The sections that lie on the slopes of Carmel are attractive. Here one street lies higher than the other, and from every one of them the traveler enjoys a superb view of the bay. The business section near the shore naturally is lively; from here Palestinian exports, oranges, grape fruit, almonds, and wine are sent to foreign countries. Haifa has no Biblical significance except that it is situated on and at the foot of Mount Carmel; but this location will always be a powerful magnet attracting thither students of the Scriptures.

Acre

IN SPEAKING OF ACRE we again stand on a solid Scriptural basis. It is true that the name does not appear in the sacred record. In the times of the Old Testament it was known as Accho; it is mentioned once by that name (Judges 1:31). In the period when the New Testament was written, it was called Ptolemais. Luke, in speaking of Paul's voyage when the Apostle was returning to Palestine after his long third missionary journey, says that Paul and his fellow travelers stayed in Ptolemais one day (Acts 21:7). I take Luke to mean that the sea voyage of the Apostle was terminated in Ptolemais and that from there he proceeded toward Caesarea on land. The town had a turbulent history, which here cannot be related. Since it is a seaport, though not an ideal one, it was much coveted; the Crusaders, as well as their opponents, were eager to have possession of it. In modern times Napoleon unsuccessfully besieged it. The town now has about 10,000 inhabitants. It is the place where the chief British prison in Palestine was located, and where the death sentences against the terrorists were carried out. There are points of archaeological interest here, many of which belong to the era of the Crusades. The town is about 12 miles north of Haifa. In its neighborhood, about five miles to the north, lies a pleasant little village adjoining the sea, called Naharia. It is a Jewish settlement which apparently is quite prosperous.



The Bay of Acre. On the right are the medieval walls of Acre. On the left, eight miles across the bay, rises the dark bulk of Mount Carmel



*This aqueduct brings water from the hills of Galilee to the city of Acre.
The foreground shows the lush fields of the Plain of Acre*

Tyre

BIBLE READERS ARE WELL ACQUAINTED with the name Tyre; it occurs not only in the New, but also in the Old Testament. It was our good fortune to make the trip from Acre to Beirut in an automobile, having the Mediterranean to our left and remaining practically always in sight of its dazzlingly blue expanse. The distance from Acre to Tyre is about 25 miles.

Soon after we had left Acre, we entered the area of old Phoenicia, the country of the seafaring people of remote antiquity. Tyre was indeed a "strong" city (Joshua 19:29) and a "joyous" town (Is. 23:7). It has a favored location; high rocks make an approach on land by enemies difficult, and in ancient times its fleets protected it against attacks from the sea. It was situated partly on the mainland and partly on an island a short distance from the shore. Nebuchadnezzar succeeded in taking the city on the mainland, but he was not quite successful in his attacks on the island. Alexander the Great manifested his military genius in his undertaking against Tyre. In the course of a seven months' siege he built a dam from the mainland to the island and thus captured the latter. This dam in the course of time has become very wide, and the island has ceased to have an isolated position. It is now the promontory of a peninsula projecting into the sea. At present Tyre is not of much significance. The prophecy (Ezek. 26:14) that Tyre will be a field of ruins upon which fishermen will spread their nets was fulfilled. It is a town of several thousand inhabit-

ants, and its chief interest consists in its ancient history. We remember that our Lord came into this region, visiting the neighborhood of Tyre and Sidon when He withdrew from the territory of Herod Antipas (cf. Mark 7:24-31). At this time He did not teach publicly, but traveled with His Apostles in unobtrusive fashion. After the Christian Church had been founded, a congregation was established in this city apparently at an early date. When Paul returned to Syria and Palestine after his third missionary journey, his ship stopped in Tyre; and since it remained in port seven days, the Apostle visited the Christians who were living there. Here, too, he was given prophetic intimation that suffering was awaiting him in Jerusalem, and the Christians pleaded with him not to go, but there were higher considerations than personal safety which actuated him in his course. (Cf. Acts 21:3-6.)

Sidon

CONTINUING NORTHWARD for about 22 miles, we came to the sister, or rather, mother, city of Tyre, Sidon, whose present name is Saida. The journey had always been along the shore, and had led past Sarafand, the Zarephath of the Old Testament (cf. 1 Kings 17:10), where Elijah was fed by a widow, whose son he brought back to life; in the New Testament the town is called Sarepta (cf. Luke 4:25 f.).

Approaching Sidon, we passed through a fruit region of great attractiveness, where not only grapes and oranges, but lemons, almonds, and bananas are grown. The modern town is merely a shadow of what the ancient city was; at present about 15,000 people live here, most of whom are Mohammedans. Here, as elsewhere in the Lebanon Republic, the Maronites are represented — a Syrian Christian sect which is in fellowship with the Roman Catholic Church, but whose priests are permitted to be married, provided they have entered the matrimonial state before ordination. Sidon has an extremely old history. It is mentioned in Gen. 10:19, and its influence was so wide and deep that the Phoenicians were simply called Sidonians. It is thought that, for instance, in 1 Kings 5:6 the reference to the Sidonians is intended as a comment on the Phoenicians in general. The Egyptian armies at the time of their greatest prowess passed by or through this city; David and Solomon, who cultivated the friendship of the Phoenicians, certainly did nothing to cause it any injury. But the Sidonians did great harm to Israel

when the daughter of their king, Jezebel, married Ahab, king of the Ten Tribes, and introduced the abominable Baal worship of her people in Samaria. (Cf. 1 Kings 16:31.) Successively the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Macedonians, and Romans were masters of the city. Our Lord came into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, but apparently never entered either one of them. Sidon is mentioned in the history of St. Paul as a place where the Apostle, Romeward bound as a prisoner, was permitted to enjoy the hospitality of the Christians when the ship on which his group traveled stopped there. Thus it, as well as Tyre, had received the Gospel at an early date — a fact confirmed indirectly in Acts 11:19. The ruins that greet the visitor are chiefly of comparatively modern date; some of them are remains of old Christian churches.

Beirut (Beyrouth)

THOUGH IT IS NOT MENTIONED in the Bible, I must say a word about Beirut, 26 miles north of Sidon. It is the largest city and the capital of the Lebanon Republic and has a population of 200,000 people. It has a magnificent location on a bay which provides a good harbor; it lies partly on plains along the sea, partly on slightly higher levels, from where the shore can be surveyed, and partly on the slopes of the foothills introducing the Lebanon Mountains. Beyond the city, in the distance to the east, the summits of the Lebanon Range can be seen, wearing a cap of snow, while the mountainsides, with their pine forests, furnish shelter to innumerable villas and hotels. It is evident that these charming woods and glens constitute the chief summer-resort region of the Near East.

Beirut is a strong Christian center for this part of the world. Here one finds many Christian churches, schools, hospitals, and monasteries. The American University, located here, is one of the strongest schools outside of Europe and America; it is undenominational. Its grounds, located near the shore, are very beautiful; delightful flower beds abound, and numerous trees dispense welcome shade.

In Beirut the East and the West meet. Certain sections are definitely Oriental, offering everything the term suggests, from striking picturesqueness to disgusting filth; other sections are altogether European in their appearance. The

traffic is animated; the harbor is busy; prosperity seems to be in the saddle.

The neighborhood of Beirut, like that of Sidon, is rich in groves of fruit trees. Approaching the city from the south, one beholds an immense tract covered with olive trees, one of the largest of its kind in the world. The shelter of the mountains on the east undoubtedly helps in making this area an ideal country for fruit trees.

The Lebanon Republic

IN THE FOREGOING SECTIONS I have referred to Phoenicia and the Lebanon Republic, and a few remarks on the territory designated by these terms will be in place. Long before the children of Israel conquered Canaan, the Phoenicians were in possession of the country which lies on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean and contains the Lebanon Mountains, with a narrow strip of arable land in front of them along the sea. The section thus briefly indicated constituted Phoenicia, whose chief cities were Tyre and Sidon. A most remarkable people were the Phoenicians; they are known to have been the best and most daring sailors of antiquity; they founded colonies in distant lands, for instance, Carthage in northwest Africa; they knew the art of writing and had an alphabet which from them came to Greece and, by that route, to western countries in general; they discovered how to manufacture glass and to produce the purple dye. Withal they were cruel, and their religious worship was marked by horrible rites. The chief goddess was Ashtoreth, who, sad to say, came to have followers in Israel, too. (Cf., for instance, 1 Kings 11:5-33.)

The country of the Phoenicians now forms the Lebanon Republic, except that the latter includes more territory than its predecessor in antiquity. The Lebanon Republic is not limited by the Lebanon Mountains, but reaches farther to the east and contains the rich valley lying between the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon Ranges, and its boundary

is formed by the summits of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains. It extends from Palestine in the south to the river known as Nahr el-Kebir in the north. The languages chiefly spoken in this country are Arabic and French. It must be remembered that France was in control of this land and of Syria under the mandate given by the Supreme Council of Allied Powers, which accounts for the French influence which here is quite noticeable. One finds it appropriate that the flag of the country displays not only the French tricolor, but a cedar tree which with its green color and white background makes the banner quite attractive. The population is 1,047,745 (*World Almanac* of 1947).

The Dog River and the Cedars

OUR PARTY HAD DECIDED ON paying a visit to the cedars of Lebanon. Would a trip to the Holy Land be complete without an inspection of these famous trees in their habitat? A strenuous trip was required. We left Beirut in a car about 5:00 A. M.; the distance to be covered was considerable. After traveling about half an hour, we reached the Nahr el-Kelb, that is, the Dog River. The Romans called it the Lycus Flumen, the Wolf River. We had arrived at one of the most historic spots on the globe. To explain the name of the river, it is stated that at one time the statue of a dog of gigantic size was placed on a cliff at this place. What makes the vicinity so famous is that the narrow and picturesque valley through which the river descends from the mountains to the sea forms a pass for travel from the coast to the countries of the East, and that it is precisely this valley which was used by famous monarchs and generals to convey their armies to the lands of the East they wished to conquer or, vice versa, by mighty men leading hosts westward. The Egyptian hosts in their attacks on Syria were taken through this gorge; the Persians marched through it on their way to the West; the Macedonians and the Romans were led to battle along this route, and in modern times French generals at the head of courageous battalions traversed the valley. All of this would not here be noted if the grand leaders had not used the stately rocks on the south side of the terminus of the gorge for immortalizing their deeds by inscriptions

which are extant and legible today. With a feeling of wonder we looked up to these ancient pronouncements, often accompanied by figures of the rulers who used this method of proclaiming their achievements. Among the monarchs represented are, for instance, Rameses II of Egypt and Sennacherib of Assyria. When one considers that these inscriptions were made by Rameses about 3,250 years ago and by Sennacherib at a time from which we are removed by about 2,650 years, one is fairly overcome by the antiquity of these memorials. Quite felicitously this series of inscriptions and figures has been called the "ancient hall of fame."

From this remarkable place we proceeded along the coast and soon arrived at a town, called Byblos by the Greeks, which now has the name Jebeil. In the Bible it is referred to as Gebal. An interesting statement in 1 Kings 5:18 speaks of stone squarers employed in the building of the Temple, and the marginal note says that the term may point to Giblytes, that is, the inhabitants of Gebal. French scholars have been excavating here, and the ruins of ancient civilization brought to light are amazing. It has become evident that at an early date the Egyptians had close contact with the people of Phoenicia. Tombs have been discovered which far antedate the conquest of Palestine by the Israelites. On top of an eminence, overlooking the beach, one sees the remains of a small Greek or Roman theater. Besides, there are interesting Christian churches here which were built late in the Middle Ages.

Continuing our trip, we arrived in the neighborhood of Tripoli, which has a favorable location on the coast. We did not enter the city, but before reaching it, we turned to the east and began to climb a mountain road. First we saw groves of fruit trees, fields of grain, and little villages. Soon the scenery began to be impressively grand; we were traveling in a narrow valley with high precipitous rocks on both sides. Higher and higher we went by means of a zigzagging



Cedars of Lebanon

road. When looking back, we could see the Mediterranean and the city of Tripoli. Finally, in the distance, we were able to discern on a plateau the dark grove of cedars; but we were still eight or ten miles away. Above us we could see the snow-covered peaks of the Lebanon Range; down below, in the valley, a mountain stream was tumbling noisily along. It was with a genuine thrill that we entered the grove of cedars. The plateau on which they are found is from 7,000 to 8,000 feet above sea level. While these trees are not the only cedars that grow in the Lebanon region, they are the only group of considerable size. Their number is about 400, of which some must be hundreds of years old. They are not strikingly tall; the highest seemed to be about 100 feet. One of their peculiar features is that the branches extend sidewise at right angles from the trunk instead of striving to reach upward. The green of the needles is so dark that it approaches blackness. Once upon a time the cedars

must have been plentiful; perhaps they grew quite generally at a certain altitude in the Lebanon Mountains. The wood is very durable, being exceedingly wormproof, which undoubtedly was the reason why it was so highly prized in antiquity and used by Solomon in the erection of the Temple. To protect the grove, a wall has been built around it, which prevents the invasion of voracious goats, which formerly ate the young sprouts and thus prevented the rejuvenation of the cluster. We ate our lunch sitting among the cedars near mounds of snow that had successfully resisted the spring sun; the date of our visit was May 3. Not far from us, perhaps a mile or two away, was the foot of a peak that rose to a height of about ten thousand feet. The cedars seemed to be at, or close to, the timber line. Our hearts were filled with gratitude toward God for the privilege granted us of enjoying the shade and the beautiful appearance of these stately trees, some of whose forebears graced the Temple in Jerusalem. The descent to the coast was accomplished comparatively quickly, and the evening found us again in Beirut.

Baalbek

WHEN A PERSON CROSSES the Lebanon Mountains on the modern road leading directly from the city of Beirut to the top of the range, mountain scenery is encountered which is of indescribable beauty. After a drive of several hours the car descends and reaches the fair valley between the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, which was called Coelesyria (the hollow of Syria) in ancient times and now is known as the Bikaa. The fertile country is renowned especially for its grapes. Traveling northward in this Bikaa, grainfields to the right and to the left of us, we by and by reached the celebrated city of Baalbek. Is it mentioned in the Bible? Not by that name. It has been thought that Baal-Gad, referred to Joshua 11:17; 12:7; 13:5 as the northern limit of the territory which Joshua subjugated, is the town under discussion, but that is a matter of doubt.

Baalbek is famous for the Greek and Roman ruins found there. It is impossible in a few sentences to give anything approaching an adequate characterization of these mute witnesses of former greatness. Evidently the early inhabitants of this region established a sanctuary here in honor of their Baal. The Greeks and Romans were mightily attracted by the place. The Romans especially exerted themselves enormously to honor their false deities by the erection of temples which were of amazing grandeur and magnitude. The area covered by them with their courts and porticoes is quite unusual. One finds here an enormous temple of Ju-



Columns of the Temple of Jupiter show former greatness of Baalbek



Detail of Columns

piter, a temple of Bacchus, which is exceedingly well preserved and whose columns are truly breath-taking, and a temple of Venus. The walls surrounding the first two temples mentioned and enclosing a citadel are worth special study. There are three stones in this wall which do not seem to have their equal anywhere in any buildings erected by man. They are 62 feet long, 14 feet wide, and 11 feet high. One wonders how they ever were put in their places. In the quarry half a mile away another such enormous block can be seen, which, however, has not been entirely freed from the parent stone in the ground. Whoever wishes to study Roman architecture in its full magnificence should by all means visit Baalbek. These Roman ruins date back chiefly to the second and third centuries of our era. Later on Christian churches were erected in this city. At present there are about 6,000 inhabitants here, one half of whom are Christians, while the other half are Mohammedans. Two rivers take their start in the vicinity, both flowing into the Mediterranean, the Orontes taking its course northward and the Leontes southward. The spring of the Leontes, located in a pleasant park, attracts many visitors.

Damascus

FROM BAALBEK, in a few hours' time by car, one can travel to old Damascus. The road leads through the valley of Coelesyria and the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, which do not quite attain the height of the Lebanon peaks, into the desert country of the East. About twenty miles before one arrives at Damascus, a little stream is met which the traveler follows and which takes him into the city. Crossing the center of the Anti-Lebanon Range, one enters Syria, a republic, numbering 2,860,441 inhabitants (*World Almanac* of 1947). Damascus naturally is the capital. It is with peculiar feelings that one enters the city. How old it is! Abraham may have seen it when he pursued the captors of Lot and the other citizens of Sodom (cf. Gen. 14:15). It is worth while to note that the steward of his house, Eliezer, was from Damascus (*ibid.*, 15:2). Here lived Naaman, the general, a "mighty man of valor," whose leprosy was cleansed through Elisha, as related 2 Kings 5:14. In a later period it successively came into the control of the great powers of the East and of the West. We are especially interested in the connection of the city with the history of St. Paul. It was near its gates on the road that the exalted Lord appeared to him; and in the city itself, when he had been blind for three days, he received his sight, was baptized, and commenced the marvelous career to which the Lord had called him, that of Apostle of the Gentiles. Here, too, the long series of persecutions began for him when enemies lay in wait to seize



The East Gate of Damascus dates back to the days of the Romans. Through its portals is seen the "street called Straight"



The "street called Straight" in St. Paul's day was a magnificent boulevard. Today it is a "poor" street, two miles long, in the heart of Damascus

him, watching the gates of the city day and night, and his life was saved by his being let down "by the wall in a basket."

The city today has a population of about 350,000 people. It is still partly surrounded by walls having picturesque gates. An opening in the wall is shown where, tradition says, Paul was lowered in a basket to the safe ground outside. The city still is crossed by the "street called Straight," one of the longest it can boast, in which there was located the house of Judas, giving shelter on an ever memorable occasion to one Saul of Tarsus. The bazaars of Damascus are world-famous; they are cleaner and more attractive than those of Cairo and Jerusalem. While the majority of the inhabitants are Mohammedans, one finds a number of Christian churches here. Of special interest is a church which includes in its precincts the legendary house of Ananias.

The Waters of Damascus

BIBLE READERS ARE FAMILIAR with the sneering remark of Naaman recorded 2 Kings 5:12, who when ordered by the Prophet Elisha to wash seven times in the Jordan, exclaimed: "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage." Damascus has reason to be proud of its rivers; if it were not for them, the city would be insignificant or nonexistent. They change a desert region into beautiful, fertile gardens, a magnificent, gigantic oasis where walnuts, apricots, and grapes are gathered and sweet-scented flowers adorn the paths and hedges.

The Abana River takes its start in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains to the west of Damascus. It is now called Barada and flows directly into the city. Coming from the west and having crossed the crest of the Anti-Lebanon Range, one is surrounded by grim rocks and apparently destined to travel in an unlimited desert. But soon a row of green trees appears, marking the course of a brook which grows into a little river, and before long one hears the pleasant gurgling of waters. The Barada has been reached, and as one follows it, the valley occasionally widens, and meadows and orchards appear. The landscape becomes more attractive, the vegetation more diversified and luxuriant, villages more frequent, and finally we see the city itself lying before us. The water of the Barada is led to all parts of Damascus and into the



The Abana (Barada) River rises in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains and with the Pharpar transforms the desert into the green Damascus oasis



The oasis of Damascus, "the Jewel of the East," stretches to the bare slopes of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains

homes of the citizens, a priceless boon in an arid country. The amount which is not distributed in the city flows into the so-called Meadow Lakes a little distance beyond.

The other river, the Pharpar, now is called the Awaj. It has its origin on the slopes of Mount Hermon, whence it flows east towards Damascus. When one leaves the city for the trip to Jerusalem, a little town is encountered which is said to be located on the spot where Christ in His glory appeared to Saul; it is about five miles distant from Damascus. Proceeding, the traveler arrives at a pleasant valley watered by the Awaj, which here spreads life and verdure. While this river does not approximate the importance of the Barada for Damascus, it is of real importance for the vicinity of the city, aiding in making its environs magnificent, fertile gardens.

It was in the early part of May that we were in Damascus. On May 11 the Rev. and Mrs. Erich H. Kiehl and I embarked on the steamer *Marathon* and, bidding good-by to Palestine, traveled westward. Mr. Leach about a week later flew from Egypt to England.

Epilog

IT SEEMS PROPER to add a summarizing chapter. As I look back upon the two-month stay in Palestine which was granted me, I wish to emphasize that I found that country beautiful. It presents a picturesque landscape of hills and valleys, and the slopes and plains, when our party toured there, were covered with grass, bright flowers, and various kinds of grain. I must not fail to mention that our visit occurred in the most favorable season of the year, in early spring, when the rains were about to cease and nature had become equipped for the preparation of the harvest. Undoubtedly, many of the hillsides, later in the year when they have been without rain for a number of months, bear a dreary and depressing aspect. Nor must it be forgotten that certain parts of Palestine are absolutely a desert; for instance, the wilderness of Judea adjacent to the Dead Sea. What little vegetation in this region the rain produces is of short duration.

I found, furthermore, that the country deserves the appellation given it repeatedly in Scripture, "the land of milk and honey." When the twelve spies whom Moses sent to view Palestine, its people and fruits, returned, they reported: "We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey" (Num. 13:27). The expression may simply be figurative, conveying the idea of satisfying, delightful plenty. But it certainly is applicable, too, when viewed in its literal significance. The visitor soon

notices that herds of cattle and especially of goats and sheep are numerous. Milk must be plentiful. That honey abounds is not surprising to anyone who sees the profusion of brilliant flowers that grace the hillsides of the Holy Land in springtime. Besides, one must not overlook that the word *honey* in the Hebrew language is not limited to the product of the industry of bees: it is used to designate a sort of sirup made from grapes. Around Hebron, where the vine flourishes as of old, a good amount of this grape honey is produced today and exported to other countries.

Palestine, so the visitor finds, has few forests today. There are beautiful woods in old Gilead, and Mount Carmel delights the eye with its clusters of trees; but, generally speaking, trees are conspicuous by their absence. Historians tell us that this was not always the aspect of the country, that, for instance, the Plain of Sharon up to the time of the Crusades was covered with forests, and that it is due to man's wanton destructiveness that the land now bears a denuded appearance. Of course, certain districts, for example, the territory about Beersheba, may never have had forests. Gen. 21:33 we are told that Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba and called there on the name of the Lord. Hebrew specialists, among them Franz Delitzsch in his commentary on Genesis, explain "grove" here to signify the tamarisk tree. Evidently there were no trees supplied by nature in the vicinity at and under which Abraham could have conducted services in honor of the true God.

Wherever one turns in Palestine, remains, monuments, footprints, of the past are to be seen. It is an old, old country with the richest history of the world; and the weather-worn masonry and mounds render their mute testimony. Traveling through it is like walking about in a huge cemetery. Some, or perhaps most, of the hoary witnesses can be identified; others insist on remaining anonymous.

It is faith-strengthening to observe how a direct study of



Dead Sea



The barren wastes of the Judean Wilderness. The path recalls "the other way" by which the Wise Men returned home



*Near the blood-soaked Jericho-Jerusalem Road lies the Wadi el-Kelt with
a Greek monastery nestling against its northern wall*



Plows — ancient and modern — as seen in a courtyard at Nazareth

the country confirms the truthfulness of Holy Scripture. Whether one dips into Old or New Testament history, everywhere the traveler finds that the Bible is right in its geographical notices, as far as they can be checked today. Thus evidence is furnished that our Sacred Volume is not a work of fiction, like the book called *Judith* among the Apocrypha, but a book of facts, reliable in everything it relates.

Closely related is the thought that a visit of the Holy Land, if it is not all too brief, helps in making us understand the narratives of the Bible. Jesus and His disciples, from the Mount of Olives, looked upon the city of Jerusalem — the note is perfectly clear after one has stood on this eminence and knows that while separated from Jerusalem only by the valley of the Kidron, it surpasses the city in height by several hundred feet and enables the traveler to survey the capital from one end to the other. The unfortunate victim of robbers in the parable went from Jerusalem *down* to Jericho; yes, indeed, the trip involved a descent, one of real magnitude, Jerusalem lying about 3,300 feet higher than Jericho. Several times the Genesis account speaks of journeys of the patriarchs, in times of famine, into Egypt — how natural it appears when one has stood in Beersheba and, on a large sign at the highway, has seen in big letters “To Egypt.” Bethany is close to Jerusalem, “about fifteen furlongs off,” says John 11:18 — and the visitor understands this perfectly when he, from the top of the Mount of Olives, turns eastward and, having walked about a mile, finds himself at Bethany and is shown “the tomb of Lazarus.” Visiting the region of Jericho and climbing the mound which constitutes the remains of the Jericho destroyed in the days of Joshua, the visitor no longer wonders that the Israelites could march around the city seven times on the seventh day of the “compassing” procedure; the circumference is hardly more than half a mile in extent. Detail after detail of this nature could be added.

Here must be mentioned, too, the insight pertaining to social and domestic matters mentioned in the Scriptures which one gains through a Palestinian visit. The tents of the Bedouins cannot have been much different in the days of Abraham from what they are now; the plowing is done, in the old fashion, with a strong prong, and at times an ox and an ass have to pull it, in defiance of the old law; threshing floors are still in use, where the grain that has been trodden out is thrown up into the air so that the wind may blow away the chaff; the houses of the lowly, built of stone or of mud bricks, can hardly have been more simple in structure and more humble in the first century than now in the twentieth; as of old, the women and girls go to the village well with jars on their heads to fetch water; and near them camels move along slowly, carrying their burdens, re-enacting scenes familiar long ago to the contemporaries of Moses and of David. In short, a visit to the Holy Land may well be called a commentary on the Bible; the lessons it teaches are as valuable as they are vivid.

With these observations I shall bring this little book to a close. I merely wish to add the prayer that whoever reads it will experience anew a lively interest in the message of Holy Scripture having at its center the Cross of Christ, our divine Savior, whose name be praised forever.

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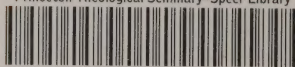
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